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ABSTRACT

The 22 articles in this collection, written by experienced teachers of English, present effective learning activities for developing a variety of skills, qualities, and attitudes in writing. Demonstrating different teaching methods, the articles relate to key principles advocated by the National Writing Project: attention to fluency, peer response, and opportunities to develop writing abilities. Part One presents ideas for helping students get started with writing. Topics dealt with include individual and group activities for developing fluency and positive attitudes toward writing, writing anxiety, simulation games, first-hand observation by students to stimulate writing, and the relation of grammar study to writing. Part Two offers a variety of ideas for developing composing skills and qualities. Specific topics covered are: planning composition experiences for a beginning essay course; the structured character sketch; a discursive approach to an advanced study of grammar; developing fluency, self-management, and confidence in writing; a self-instructional thematic unit; planning writing for literature study; use of dialogue in narrative writing; and writing from reading. Part Three contains ideas for helping students revise their writing. Specific topics are: self- and peer-provided feedback, writing with a checklist, the responsibility for revision, writing problems, planning for the spontaneous essay, publication for the gifted student, and balancing the composition emphasis. (FL)

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WRITING: FROM WALLS TO PAPER

The Texas Hill Country

Writing Project

1979

Austin, Texas

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Table of Contents

Introduction: From Fluency to Effectiveness . . .
Walter J. Lamberg

Part One: Ideas to Get Started . . . . . .

Group Activities to Enhance Fluency . . . . .
Yolanda Rocha

Focused Assignments for Fluency: One Week's
Worth of Warmups . . . . . .
Carol V. Hovland

Is Johnny Afraid to Write? . . . . . .
Adrienne Tropp

Using Stimulation--Games to Stimulate Writing . .
Jo Kallison

Observing One's Surroundings . . . . . .
Kathy Waller

Bridging the Gap Between Grammar and Writing . . .
Betty Avant

Part Two: Ideas to Keep Growing . . . . . .

Planning Composition Experiences for a Beginning
Essay Class . . . . . .
Maida Draker

The Structured Character Sketch . . . . . .
Sharon Cartlidge

A Discursive Approach to An Advanced Study
of Grammar . . . . . .
Carole Jorgensen

Developing Fluency, Self-Management, and
Confidence in Writing . . . . . .
Stacey H. Sanders

Self-Directed Packet: Man's Inhumanity to
Man . . . . . .
Donna Gage

Planning Writing for Literature Study . . . . .
Estafana Carrasco

4

Use of Dialogue in Narrative Writing . . . . .
Annie January

Writing from Reading . . . . . .
Tom Vannatta

Part Three: Ideas to Finish and Move One . . . .

Self-Provided and Peer-Provided Feedback . . . .
Walter J. Lamberg

Responding to Writing with a Checklist . . . . .
Claire Anderson

The Responsibility for Revision . . . . . .
Jolene S. Hall

Disorders of Written Language . . . . . .
Susan Wiswell

Planning for the Spontaneous Essay . . . . . .
Susan J. Fugate

Publication for the Gifted Student . . . . . .
Patty S. Clark

Balancing the Composition Emphasis . . . . . .
Paty Kimbal

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INTRODUCTION

FROM FLUENCY TO EFFECTIVENESS

FROM FLUENCY TO EFFECTIVENESS

Walter J. Lamberg
The University of Texas at Austin

The articles in this collection, written by experienced teachers of English, present effective learning activities for developing a variety of skills, qualities and attitudes in writing. Though they demonstrate different teaching approaches and methods, the articles relate and contribute to key principles for teaching writing which are advocated by the National Writing Project: attention to fluency, peer-response, and opportunities to develop writing abilities.

Fluency

Writing fluency has to do with the speed and ease by which the writer translates his thoughts into written symbols. The fluent writer does not necessarily find the act of composing either an easy or quick task. The generation of ideas, the decisions as to how to develop those ideas, the retrieval of information or the search for new information, the polishing of style -- all of these aspects of composing may be difficult and slow.

The very basic writing (as opposed to composing) skills, or subroutines of the writing process, however, have been mastered to the extent that they can be accomplished quickly, easily, automatically. Such basic skills might include: manipulating the

pen or pencil comfortably, producing legible letters, spelling the most common words, grouping words into grammatical sentences, and punctuating.

The non-fluent writer can not do all of that automatically. He or she must stop to think about how to hold the pen, shape the letter p, spell then or was, or place a period. Having to think consciously about these matters, the student can not concentrate, as the fluent writer can, on the ideas being developed from one sentence to another and from one paragraph to another. Added to that problem is the anxiety, or fear about making errors, which further interferes with attention to the content.

Fluency can be developed rather quickly and painlessly with some kind of frequent, regular free writing practice. With such practice, students are freed from having to be concerned with meeting all the many demands of finished, polished adult writing. They are not penalized for making mistakes. They are encouraged to try to write as much as they can, as quickly as they can. With such practice the basic skills come under control, and the writers can capture their thinking on paper.

Ken Macrorie recommends writing freely with and without focus. With the first exercise, students write whatever comes to mind, for ten to fifteen minutes at a time. Their goal is to fill a notebook page. With focused writing, students try to stick to one subject or aspect of the subject.[1]

Rowena Wilhelm recommends "Writing Dictionary" Students are given pictures as a concrete stimulus to respond to. If they need help, they ask for it, and the teacher responds immediately.

Most of the help consists of spelling words. Instead of telling the student to look up a word in the dictionary (and thus break his or her train of thought), the teacher writes the word on the board or on a piece of paper; the student copies it. The teacher, therefore, functions as a "writing dictionary."

Such writing is not graded or marked for errors. As a simple form of measurement, Wilhelm recommends that students count the number of words they write and record the total on a graph. The graph shows the progress students are making in increasing their quantity and fluency from one exercise to another. Students can share their free writing with classmates, who make a positive note on some aspect of the writing.[2]

Peer-Response

With peer-response, students are not limited to the teacher as the audience for, and evaluator of, their writing. Responses can come from one or two classmates, a group of four to six which meets regularly and frequently during the semester, and the whole class. Peer responses can include: a note of something the peers like (as little as one well-chosen word), a summary or translation of the content of the writing, an identification of strengths in the writing or difficulties that the readers had, suggestions for completing or revising, and proofreading.

The Opportunity to Develop as Writers

Proficient writing is believed to be a highly complex process involving many linguistic and cognitive operations or skills and

understandings. Many ineffective writers might have simply missed the opportunity to develop their abilities. Either they had little or no writing experience in their early years, or they were expected from the very start to show abilities they did not have time to develop.

The Bay Area Writing Project suggests this scheme to illustrate the developmental process: fluency to form to correctness. A more elaborate scheme is: fluency to structure to completeness to correctness to effectiveness.

Initially, students have the opportunity to increase fluency. They are then asked to attempt structured writing; that is, to move from free writing to composing. Macrorie's focused writing is a logical transition. To provide structure, the teacher can (1) assign modes, narration or description; (2) specify means of development (or the classical topics), by example, by comparison-contrast, by cause-effect; (3) specify purpose, to inform, to pursuade, to entertain; or (4) establish other limits, such as "write about something that happened to you in less than twenty-four hours."

Having shown some understanding of structure, students can strive for completeness; that is, fulfill the internal requirements of the structure. Emphasis may vary given students of differing ability. For example, all students might be working on complete narratives, but some will also be working on spelling (complete words); others, on sentence structure; still others, on sufficiently developed or complete paragraphs.

Assignments that involve complete discourse provide a desirable experience for attention to and mastery of matters of correctness and appropriateness. Many of these matters make little or no sense when taught in isolation. In context, they make sense and are therefore more readily learned. For example, the correct spelling of the homonyms, there, their, they're, is necessary when the words are used in sentences. Pronoun forms are dictated by the relationship between pronouns and nouns in one or more sentences. Levels of diction become appropriate or inappropriate only given certain audiences and purposes.

The writer becomes free to consider effectiveness when he or she has mastered the basic skills, has achieved control over structure, and can make sense of matters of correctness. The effective writer appears to be one who can generate and select a number of alternatives, not just two alternatives between what is correct or incorrect, but several alternatives which, given a context, vary in effectiveness.

This scheme is not meant to dictate a strict linear sequence. It is better conceived of as a spiral, with students at every level having the chance to work for fluency and structures (when new ones are introduced) and so forth. At different times in a course, different aspects can be emphasized, though overlapping is possible. For example, even with free writing, students can try to increase quantity (fluency) while trying for more specific or honest language (effectiveness). The scheme also suggests emphases at different stages during the process of composing one piece. In pre-writing, the intitial emphasis can be on fluency --

generating ideas. In the first draft, structure can be the emphasis. In the revision, attention can first be on completeness, then on correctness, then on polishing for effectiveness. The scheme of fluency to ultimate effectiveness provides a framework for the articles in this collection.

Part One presents ideas for helping students get started with writing. Yolanda Rocha and Carol Hovland describe individual and group activities for developing fluency and positive attitudes toward writing. Adrienne Tropp discusses writing anxiety and recommends procedures for identifying and reducing this common problem. Jo Kallison illustrates how commercially published simulation-games can be used to provide an enjoyable and thoughtful stimulus for writing. Kathy Waller's article illustrates the need for first-hand observation by students. Betty Avant shows how grammar study can be related to the writing of prose and poetry.

Part Two presents a wide variety of ideas for developing composing skills and qualitites. Maida Draker offers a framework for composition courses. Sharon Cartlidge describes a structured approach to writing character analyses. Carole Jorgenson shows how writing assignments can be provided in an advanced grammar course. Stacey Sanders describes procedures for a special projects component of her English courses. Donna Gage presents a self-instructional thematic unit. Estafana Carrasco, Annie January, and Tom Vannatta explain units and lessons which provide balanced and related attention to reading and writing skills development.

Part Three presents ideas for helping students revise. Walter Lamberg develops a definition of feedback and explains the potential effectiveness of having students evaluate their own and their peers' writing. Claire Anderson describes the use and benefits of a checklist for peer and self-evaluation. Jolene Hall provides activites for developing revising skills. Susan Wiswell discusses severe problems in writing. Susan Fugate argues for preparing students to meet the demands of impromptu essay examinations. Patty Clark describes her course for gifted students, which emphasizes publication. Finally Patsy Kimball describes her system for managing a balanced course in language arts.

References

[1]Ken Macrorie, Writing To Be Read (New York: Hayden, 1968).

[2]Rowena Wilhelm, "The Writing Dictionary," in Donald E. P. Smith, The Adaptive Classroom (New York: Academic Press, 1977), pp. 252-266.

PART ONE

IDEAS TO GET STARTED

GROUP ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE FLUENCY

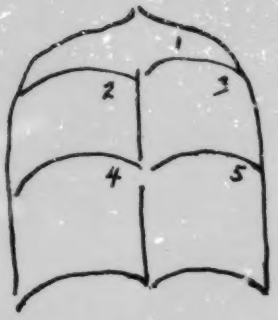
Yolanda Rocha
Dobie Junior High School

It is important that students write and write often. Unfortunately, writing is an ordeal of nervousness and self-consciousness, particularly for those who must strain for every word or phrase. Realizing that we must provide our students with successful opportunities that will lessen the fear and difficulty of writing, many educators have advocated the following sequence for writing development: fluency — form — correctness. Attention to fluency is vital for beginning writers who must develop their speed and ease of writing before they attempt to meet the more precise and analytical qualities of form and style. The following activities can be used in writing group situations to provide students with successful opportunities that enhance fluency through a structured approach.

Activity 1. Getting In Touch With Yourself: The Shield Game

Purpose. To increase fluency by having students tap their own expriences as a source for their writing.

Stimulus. Divide the class into groups of four or five. Ask the students to draw a shield and divide the shield into five sections as shown below.



Assignment. In one or two complete sentences, students record the following experiences in each of the designated spaces: (1) funniest or happiest moment: (2) saddest or most embarrassing memory; (3) greatest fear; (4) what he would do if he could do anything; (5) what he knows more about than anyone in the world. (The last one is difficult especially for the student who really suffers from lack of self-esteem, but it forces him to come up with at least one thing he does well.)

Each student then writes freely for ten minutes about any one section. The class should not worry about grammar or mechanics and should keep their pens moving at all times during the designated writing time. After ten minutes, each student exchanges with a member of his writing group who reads the free writing, but makes no comment.

Time. The free writing and sharing take about 20 minutes.

Activity 2. Getting In Touch With the Paper

Purpose. To increase fluency by having students write freely on a focused object, topic, or idea.

Stimulus. Divide the class into groups of four or five. Give each group a list of topics, objects, or pictures and ask the group to select one topic, object, or picture to write about.

Assignment. Students write for five minutes on the topic selected by their group. When time is called, each student passes his paper to the person on his left, who reads the writing, then continues writing on the paper he received for five more minutes. The process continues until each paper has been to each group member and finally returns to the person who began it. Results are four or five Round-Robin narratives that are often humorous and that inspire class discussions in such topics as point of view, transition, or differences in styles. Each group is asked to share one or more papers with the class.

Time. Depending on the size of the group and the time devoted to sharing, this activity would take from 30-45 minutes.

Activity 3. The Great Picture Narrative

Purpose. To provide a writing experience for fluency and group cooperativeness.

Stimulus. Divide the class into groups of five. Provide the students with directions or demonstrate to the class the process of making contact paper slides. Ask each student to make one slide.

Assignment. After all slides have been made, students, as a group, must compose a short narrative of at least ten lines that corresponds to all five slides. After about twenty minutes, one group member reads the composed narrative to the class as he shows the slides.

Time. The time elements will vary, but the teacher should plan for at least two class periods for this activity.

Procedure for making slides:

Materials. Magazines, a box of dry mount slide frames, three or four yards of clear contact paper, pan of water, scissors, and iron.

Process:

1. Select from the magazines a picture or portion of a picture, framing the area with a slide mount for size. Cut out the picture and lay it face up on a counter or desk.
2. Cut a piece of contact paper slightly larger than the slide frame size. Peel off the backing paper and lay it over the picture, sticky side down.
3. Using a spoon or other rounded instrument, rub over the picture firmly. Do some really concentrated rubbing over the entire area.
4. Now that the inks of the picture are firmly adhered to the contact, remove the magazine paper by soaking it in water. After peeling off the paper, rub the back of the contact with damp cotton to remove further bits of paper residue clinging to the picture.
5. Center the picture in the slide mount and cut away the excess. Seal the frame with a warm iron.

Activities of this type are successful in involving the student in writing and group cooperation while enhancing his fluency, thus making the transition to more formal levels of writing much more successful.

FOCUSED ASSIGNMENTS FOR FLUENCY: ONE WEEK'S WORTH OF WARMUPS

Carol V. Hovland
Allan Junior High School

Context

The teacher can use these exercises for fluency at the beginning of a language arts or writing class. Later, the assignments may be used as a source of topics for paragraphs or themes. I would suggest that free writing or focused journal writing always be saved and regarded by the students as a source for writing ideas to meet later formal assignments.

Purpose

The purpose of these assignments is to increase fluency by giving the writer a chance to write quickly by providing some structure in the form of a sentence stem or topic.

Explanation

The teacher should explain that the assignment is for fluency, i.e., it will not be evaluated for mechanics. The writer should try to keep the pencil moving during the brief writing period. It helps some students to keep writing, "I'm stuck, I'm stuck," until they think of an idea. This activity may be compared to calisthenics or any warm-up in sports. We are warming up our writing arms.

Assignments

Day 1. The Personal Encyclopedia. This assignment is based on the work at the Kansas City Art Museum. Tapes and letters are collected from people of all ages across the United States. On the tapes, people are to tell 10-15 things that they feel really sure about. Each sentence is to begin, "I know..." (The teacher might try this assignment the night before and share a list with the class. This gives them a model and also lets students get to know the writing teacher better.)

After the students have worked for 8-10 minutes, the teacher says, "Stop writing." The teacher may then ask the students to star their 3 favorite sentences or the sentences that would head their list of "I knows" if they rank ordered them. The teacher may then type up an anonymous list for the class or put a large sheet of paper up and have each class member contribute one sentence. At some later date, the group may want to discuss the list. They may note any patterns they see or possibly use this list to generate some topics for paragraph writing. The teacher may point out that one source of topics for writing is our personal "I know" list, things that we, as writers, feel sure about.

Day 2. The "If" assignment. Students create three or four two-line If poems.

Example: If Mork left for Ork,
He would take Mindy with him.

The teacher should point out that the first line will need a comma after it, and the second line will require a period at the end.

After 5-8 minutes, students star their favorite "If" sentence and share it with a friend. A class compilation may be made of everyone's favorite. If students keep grammar journals, they can copy their favorite "If" poem under Adverb Clauses.

Day 3. A Sense of Wonder Assignment. (Invented by Johnnie L. Demps, Allan Junior High School) Give students a structure and ask them to fill it in three times. Often the students will find that the sequence that develops is very interesting.

Structure

I used to wonder...
But now I know...
I learned...
Oh, the joy of discovery.

Example from an 8th grader:

A Sense of Wonder

I used to wonder how to kiss a boy,
But now I know because I tried it.
I learned it's easy.
Oh, the joy of discovery.

Day 4. Writing to Music. The teacher selects and plays a musical selection, preferably one without words. It might be interesting to select Indian music or early classical music, something the students are not familiar with. Students listen with eyes closed and then write for 5-10 minutes any thoughts, images, colors, memories that this music suggests to them. The teacher might play the selection again while the students are writing. The class might be interested in seeing if there was any agreement on which colors the music suggested.

Day 5. Evaluation. If these assignments are done in a single week, students can do some self editing or peer editing on the final day. Have each student select one of his writings and copy it over, editing for spelling, punctuation, and correct sentence form. At this point students could add a title if they don't yet have one. The student may then share his edited piece with another student or with his peer response group. Give a final chance for changes in the writing and then have the student contribute the writing to a class collection which may be copied on ditto masters or posted in the room for other students to read. The teacher may grade this final piece and also give a grade for completion only on the four focused writing assignments. For example: four completed / A, three completed / B, two completed / C.

A Final Word:

Remember to try these assignments with your students.

"The single most dramatic change that can be made in a language arts or English teacher who wants to teach writing is for the teacher to write with the students."[1]

Reference

[1] Donald Murray, "Teaching the Motivating Force of Revision," English Journal, 67, 7 (October, 1978).

IS JOHNNY AFRAID TO WRITE?

Adrienne Tropp
McCallum Senior High School

There was two boys cutting their lawns they were Jeff and Tommy ABBott. Their father was away with a man named Mr. Wilson. Their mother was in the house she got a phone call from their aunt Doroty. She called to tell Mrs. ABBott to come over their Uncle Jim sprained his ankle. Aunt Dorothy wanted Mrs. ABBott to come take care of the two boys. Mother tolled the boys a man was going to come and fix the stove. Their father sent a telegram telling the boys he is coming home early. So the boyds decided that they are going to cook dinner...

I would like to be 18 years old for the following reasons.

I would like to be able to drive a car and a motorcycle on the road. I am not interested in going to college, but would like to get a good job. I enjoy working with my hands. I wouldn't have to go to school anymore. I could see the late Television shows and stay up as late as I want, Like three o'clock in the morning...

Since these selections are from the same class, a teacher, looking at them, would wonder, "How am I going to teach these two students who have such different writing skills and needs?" Such a response would be wrong. Both selections were written by the same student during the same week of school. The authors of "Who Says Johnny Can't Write?" feel that the reason for the "dramatic change" in the two selections is that the student was more interested and committed to the second writing assignment; he had less anxiety about it.[1] By identifying writing anxiety and dealing with it, teachers can discover improvement in the writing of many students.

Typical Behavior of Anxious Writers

Students who suffer from writing anxiety may exhibit a number of behaviors or reactions. One of the most obvious is the feeling that writing is a struggle. Blank-paper paralysis may be an extreme manifestation of that feeling. Students who refuse to turn in assignments may be suffering anxiety, as well. Defeatism or general hopelessness at the writing process and the result of it is also common. On the other extreme is the perfectionist who dislikes turning in a less than perfect paper.

Writers who suffer from anxiety may also exhibit gamesmanship or ritualism. In the former, the writer will make a game out of writing. For instance, he may wait until the clock strikes the half hour to begin work. If, however, he looks down and discovers that it is 12:31 instead of 12:30, he will delay working until exactly one o'clock. A writer who suffers from ritualism concocts a particular pattern or situation under which he must write. For instance, he must use a blue pen or he is unable to do the assignments. Probably one of the least recognized, but most obvious symptoms of writing anxiety is procrastination.[2] The student who is late in turning in a paper is probably suffering from writing apprehension. Of course all writers suffer from some anxiety and have experienced some of the feelings described. Students who suffer from a high level of anxiety or who are unable to function because of their anxiety need help.

Diagnosing Anxiety

Before teacher can help these students, they need to recognize the symptoms of writing anxiety. There are several ways to do

this. A teacher may simply ask the student to voice his or her opinion of or reaction to a writing assignment and assess whether the student exhibits the behavior of an anxious writer. By analyzing two writing selections from a student, such as the two presented at the beginning of the article, a teacher can observe an obvious writing problem.

Certain characteristics are discernible:

shorter essays
less qualified writing
confusing syntax
overgeneralizations
expletives
capitalization and spelling errors

The occurence of these traits will signal a high level of writing apprehension.[3]

Another means of diagnosis is the use of a scale or attitude survey, such as one developed by Daly.[4] These instruments consist of positive and negative statements about writing. Students check or rate statements, that apply to them, such as "I avoid writing," "I'm nervous about writing."

Techniques for Reducing Anxiety

Except for extreme cases, remedies to reduce apprehension in a high anxiety writer will benefit everyone in the class. Overall these procedures are meant to build confidence in a student's writing ability. Macrories's free writing or focused writing is a good exercise for students if the teacher or a peer response group avoids criticizing the student's work.[5] Without overdoing it, the evaluator should look for items to praise in the student's

writing. Gradually the teacher (or peer group) may offer one suggestion for improvement, then a second.

While students are writing, they should be aware of their reactions and can maintain a journal to record them. In reading the journal, a teacher may be able to offer specific suggestions to overcome any writing anxiety. Acquainting students with writers' feelings about writing may also alleviate some of the student's own anxiety. Perhaps James Michener's comment, "I have never thought of myself as a good writer..." may offer encouragement to an insecure writer. Figure 1 has a sample of a journal.

Soemtimes anxiety results from a lack of knowledge about the writing process. Therefore a teacher should acquaint (more probably reacquaint) the student with skills for choosing and narrowing topics, brainstorming for, and organizing, ideas, writing and revising papers. However, a student who possesses these skills may still find the writing process formidable. The teacher and student should reduce the composing process to small feasible units. The student can then contract to do a small unit at a time. Another common method of reducing anxiety is to provide a student with topics in which he is interested.

Some Concluding Thoughts

In spite of the teacher's best efforts, not all students who experience high writing anxiety will be helped by these methods. The student may have problems which should be referred to the school counselor. However, most students should experience lower writing anxiety if these techniques are utilized. And maybe the

public will discover that Johnny can write and that up to now his high anxiety inhibited his writing ability.

References

[1]Robert Parker, Jr. and Leslie Meskin, "Who Says Johnny Can't Write?" English Journal, (November, 1976), 42-46.

[2]JoAnn Cope, "Writing Apprehension." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western College Reading Association. Long Beach, Ca., 1978.

[3]John Daly, "The Effects of Writing Apprehension on Writing Performance," Journalism Quarterly, 1977.

[4]John Daly and Michael Miller, "The Empirical Development of an Instrument to Measure Writing Apprehension," Research in the Teaching of English, 9, 1975, 242-249.

[5]Ken Macrorie, Writing To Be Read (New York: Hayden, 1978).

Student I:

I didn't write anything in class today, because there was too much talking. So I was going to do it at home. But I fought with my mother instead. Thoughts: I couldn't get involved because Sue and Janie were talking and I wanted to hear what they were saying then I was too mad at my mother to work.

Teacher's Comments:
In class you should try to move away from Sue and Janie so that you cannot hear their conversations. So tomorrow when you come in, move your seat. If you were any angry at your mother, you should have written about that. Perhaps it could have been used for yesterday's assignment. If not, write down how angry you were and then destroy the paper so that your mother will not find it. After you had written about your argument, I bet you could have started your assignment.

Student II:

Couldn't think of nothing to write about. So did nothing.

Teacher's response:
You could have written about how hard it is to think of something to say. Another option would have been to write a paper entitled, "Interesting topics to write about." You probably could have thought of some interesting topics for papers. Another choice could have been to write about what you wish you had been doing if you didn't need to be in class.

Figure 1. Sample Journal Entries

USING SIMULATION-GAMES TO STIMULATE WRITING

Jo Kallison
Dobie Junior High School

Teachers over the years have consistently sought out new and different means of stimulating student writing. Although this search continues, many students still complain they have "nothing to say." One such method which I have found successful is the use of simulation-games. "In simulation-games, situations are taken from real-life situations and provide a fun and challenging experience for the students."[1] Simulation-games also provide students with a common ground of experience which insures that they will have something to say to one another when it's time to write.

One particular simulation-game which I have used successfully in a junior high school English class is RaFa RaFa.[2] RaFa RaFa is a cross-culture game simulating two cultures (Alpha and Beta) with different structures and different kinds of behavior. Among other purposes, the game serves to illustrate the difficulties and problems one may encounter when interacting with others who are different from ourselves.

The game can be played in a 55 minute class period. The class should be divided into two groups, with each group placed in a separate classroom for the remainder of the game. It is essential that the two groups be unable to see or hear each other. During the first stage of the game, members of each

culture receive taped instruction as to the rules governing their new and different way of living. The Alphas and Betas then begin to practice their own cultures.

After the two groups have practiced for a few minutes, a person from each group is sent to the other group to observe and learn the rules of the foreign culture. He then returns and attempts to explain the culture to his own group. Usually the observers come back with very little "real" information about the rules governing the other culture.

In the second stage of the game, small groups of visitors are exchanged. They are to participate in the alien culture for approximately three minutes, still trying to ascertain more information about the culture's rules. When the visitors return to their home culture, they are given a brief opportunity to relate any new observations. The play of the game is completed when each member has visited the alien culture.

Generally speaking, the visitors usually do not interact successfully with the alien culture. Many visitors make initial attempts to interact, but after being scorned or shunned by the members of the culture, simply isolate themselves for the remainder of the visitation period. There are, however, some exceptions. Certain participants from each culture will make repeated attempts to interact according to what they think are the rules. Upon returning to the home culture, though, the visitors can rarely verbalize accurately the steps necessary for successful interaction in the alien culture. Thus, the subsequent visitors benefit very little from the experiences of the previous groups.

After completing the rounds of visits (approximately 45-55 minutes), the two cultures are reunited in one room. At this time, the procedure is for the game director to conduct a debriefing discussion. For my purposes, however, I give the students nine questions suggested in the Director's Manual and ask them to write a response to one. This is done at home and brought to class the following day. These are the nine choices used for the writing assignment:

1. As an Alpha member, explain the Beta culture.
2. As a Beta member, explain the Alpha culture.
3. As an Alpha member, how did the Beta visitors appear to you?
4. As a Beta member, how did the Alpha visitors appear to you?
5. As Alpha members, describe your feelings and thoughts when you visited the Beta culture.
6. As Beta members, describe your feelings and thoughts when you visited the Alpha culture.
7. As a Beta member, explain your culture.
8. An an Alpha member, explain your culture.
9. State which culture you would prefer to live in and explain your choice.

The following day I begin class by conducting the debriefing discussion. At this time the students share with each other the ideas formulated in their written responses. The students are then asked to revise their compositions in order to submit a final product.

Many students produce compositions with perceptive insights. More importantly, however, all students produce something because they have been given the experience of the simulation on which to

base their writing. Thus, the simulation-game can be a useful tool for stimulating students to write.

References

[1]Lynn Q. Troyka and John Nudelman, Taking Action; Writing, Reading, Speaking and Listening Through Simluation Games (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1975), p.vi.

[2]R. Garry Shirts, RaFa RaFa: A Cross Culture Simulation (Del Mar, California: Simile II, 1975).

Additional Sources

Horn, Robert E. The Guide to Simulation Games. New York: Didactic Systems, Inc., 1977.

Zieler, Richard. Games for School Use: An Annotated List. Yorktown Heights, New York: Board of Cooperative Educational Services.

For a catalogue of other games, write:

Simile II
218 Twelfth Street
P.O. Box 910
Del Mar, California 92014

OBSERVING ONE'S SURROUNDINGS
OR
IT'S NOT VERY INTERESTING AROUND HERE, SO WHAT SHALL I WRITE

Kathy Waller
Marion High School

When the teachers ask students to write from their own experiences, they frequently discover that they must first help the students remember an experience to write about. Happenings the writer might consider uninteresting and commonplace suddenly become worth relating because of pre-writing activities provided by the teacher or peers. On the other hand, a story the student thinks is interesting may make for flat prose because of the absence of vivid sensory images.

In both cases, part of the problem is the lack of observation by the writer. To have material to write about, and to write about it well, the student must use his or her senses to collect information from the environment and must learn to choose words that will best convey impressions.

The following activities are designed to increase students' awareness of their school and community environments. They are very general and are subject to wide adaptation. They may be used at any level. Students who are potential yearbook staffers but whose schedules do not include a preparatory journalism course can also benefit from these activities. (So, it is hoped, will the yearbook.)

The goals of these activities are (1) to increase students' awareness of their surroundings; (2) to increase the students' skill in translating sensory impressions into words; and (3) to increase skill in composing simple, direct sentences.

General Information Questions

Compile a list of questions, as in Figure 1, concerning important names, organizations, and events about the school. Ask students to answer the questions, giving complete names and titles and spelling everything correctly. At the end of the allotted time, the list may be checked, students may group and pool information, or students may be required to complete the assignment as homework. Questions may be added as the year progresses.

Writing Captions

This activity can involve the whole class or small groups. Materials needed are several poster-sized photographs (preferably backed by cardboard or another stiff material) of students engaged in various activities about the school. A name and possibly other information may be attached to the photograph; for example, Ralph Jones, senior, FFA secretary, band member. Show students the photographs. Have them write a one-sentence caption for each photograph.

Two variations involve sentence combining exercises. Give students a list of short sentences based on the photograph. Have them combine the information into one sentence, as in the example below.

1. Joe Roberts is a senior.
2. Joe Roberts is a member of the Ag Club.
3. Joe Roberts received the Young Farmer Award.
4. Principal Max Smith presented Joe with the award.
5. Joe received the award at the spring banquet.
6. The banquet was given by the Ag Club.

Senior Joe Roberts accepts the Young Farmer Award from Principal Max Smith at the Ag Club's spring banquet.

This procedure may require students to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant details.

With the second variation, ask students to speak or write several short sentences based on the photograph. Write several on the blackboard. Combine the sentences in various ways and discuss the variations.

Recording Observations

These exercises, done individually, require students to use their senses to investigate their school and community. Settings may be changed to suit specific purposes of assignments. Students may write in their private journals or for peer response. These exercises, in Figure 2, stress specific, concrete detail.

The Article

Have students brainstorm a list of topics for inclusion in the school yearbook (or month- or weekbook). Assign one article to each person. Students prewrite, write, respond, revise, and polish according to usual procedures. Finished articles may be published in a class book. Students may illustrate the book with art work or photographs.

SAMPLE GENERAL INFORMATION QUESTIONS

1. What is the principal's full name?
2. What are his academic degrees and where did he receive them?
3. Who is the captain of the football team?
4. Where are the first three footbal games this year?
5. Who is the President of the Student Council? Vice-president? Secretary? Treasurer? Class representatives?
6. When does the Student Council meet? Where?
7. Name all the English teachers. What courses does each teach?
8. When does basketball season start?
9. Who coaches volleyball? Basketball? Football? Track?
10. What students are eligible to take driver education?
11. How many people does the cafeteria serve each day (average)? What is the price of lunch? Breakfast?
12. What is the enrollment of the high school?

Figure 1. Sample General Information Questions

1. Look around you. List three things you've never noticed before. Describe them.

2. Walk down the hall. When you get back to the room, list five things you saw. Each description should be one sentence long.

3. Write for ten minutes about one of the things you listed in #2.

4. Shut your eyes. For about two minutes listen to sounds around you. List all the sounds you hear.

5. Do #2 and #3, but this time focus on sounds.

6. Go to a place of business (beauty shop, meat market, gas station, grocery store, etc.). Notice smells. What smell predominates? After you leave, describe the smells.

7. Shut your eyes. Have a friend feed you a bite of food you haven't seen. Describe the taste. Use no visual detail.

8. Do #6 for sight.

9. Do #6 for sounds.

10. Choose a person you see often. Describe his appearance. Consider facial appearance, size, body, coloring, any distinguishing marks.

11. Describe #10's sound. Consider time and situation in your description. (Is he loud in some situations and quiet in others?)

12. Describe #10's movements, posture, gestures, facial expressions.

13. What do you know about #10? Likes and dislikes? Family and friends? Plans? Beliefs?

14. Write a character sketch of #10. Use information you've recorded.

15. At lunch, observe the actions of a schoolmate for several minutes. Record his actions. After writing, replace flat verbs with vivid ones. Check the thesaurus. Discuss word choices with a friend or with your peer group.

16. Observe an encounter between two or more people. Follow directions for #15.

Figure 2. Observation Exercises

BRIDGING THE CAP BETWEEN GRAMMAR AND WRITING

Betty Avant
Georgetown Senior High School

The Grammar Gap

As English teachers, we are well aware that there is no larger gap between life and the classroom than between life and grammer. Language is easy, fluent, and spontaneous. Grammar study, on the other hand, is abstract, difficult, and sometimes insurmountable. The reason may be that grammar is taught in sterile isolation, and students see no purpose to the study. Formal grammar study usually treats grammar as an end product instead of the means to the end. Since students have no motivation for this study, seeing no pertinence in it, there is very little transfer of ideas from grammar study to writing, except by those few who are self-motivated to make the transfer. There seems to be a button in the minds of the majority of the students that automatically says "reject" with any formal study of the tools of the language.

Relating Grammar to Prose

One way to bring relevance to the study of grammar is to always present it in comjunction with some type of writing assignment. For example, an interesting way to use grammar and writing as meaningful partners is through a year-long or semester-long project called a Grammatical Autobiography, as described by

Wolfe.[1] In this project the personal experience of the writer is used to relate grammar to writing, as shown in Figure 1.

The Grammatical Autobiography exercises can be used at the beginning of, and continued throughout, a grammar course. As the semester progresses, this collection of assignments can be used as a personal grammar notebook. These assignments should be kept in a special notebook to which students add from time to time in conjunction with their grammar study. They should also decorate and illustrate the Grammatical Autobiography, as well as give it a person title.

Students can leave space in front of the notebook to add a table of contents as the project progress. Also, they can label each section of the notebook according to grammatical categories. This enables them to use it more readily is a reference or study guide.

Relating Grammar to Poetry

In addition to prose assignments, poetry can be a meaningful way to bridge the gap between grammar and writing. The Five Sense Poem aids in teaching of adjectives, and the Diamond Poem illustrates nouns, adjectives, and antonyms. The Cinquain Poem uses nouns, adjectives, verbs, phrases, and synonyms in its construction. The Blotz Poem encompasses alliteration, nouns, adverbs, adjectives, and verbs. Besides learning grammar through poetry, the students always enjoy writing these poems. The structures for these poems are in Figure 2.

"Grammatical" poetry can be used very successfully at the beginning of a grammar course to "break the ice." Students of all ages, from grades 7 to 12, enjoy writing this type of poetry. The assignment can also be used when studying a poetry unit in literature. It serves as a good grammar review in this respect.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the Grammatical Autobiography need not be complicated. The sentences can be read in peer response groups, where positive suggestions for revisions are made. Also, some sentences might be shared with the entire class. The writer then makes the final decision for a revision. If a revision is made, correction fluid might be used to prevent a messy appearance in the notebook.

After the peer group evaluation, the teacher then grades the notebook for content as a main priority. Grammar and mechanics should be noted, but the teacher should not put red ink marks in the notebook. Comments in pencil are better. This, after all, is the student's personal writing, and it should be a positive project at all times.

The "grammatical" poetry can also be read in peer response groups and selected poems can be read to the entire class. Once again, the same procedure of reading and revision can be used. As a related project, the students can publish their poetry in booklet or magazine format. A major grade can be given for the published writing.

References

[1]Don M. Wolfe, Creative Ways to Teach English: Grades 7 to 12 (New York: Odyssey Press, 1966).

Suggested Sequence:

The sequence of questions below is from easy to difficult. The questions are only suggestive. If some questions seem too elementary for your grade, pass them by. The teacher of grade seven or grade twelve will wish to modify the sequence to suit her needs. Many students will think of autobiographical ideas that they would like to express in grammatical form. Others will think of grammatical constructions they have always found difficult. Autobiographical sentences may help them fix the constructions in mind, especially when the ideas are exchanged with those of fellow-students.

1. In what state were you born? Use and underline a prepositional phrase. Example: I was born in Nebraska.
2. When were you born? Use and underline a prepositional phrase. Example: I was born on October 24, 1943.
3. What is your father's name? Use and underline a predicate noun. Example: My father's name is Charlie.
4. On what street do you live? Use and underline a prepositional phrase. Example: I live on Rogers Avenue.
5. What color are your eyes? Use a predicate adjective. Example: My eyes are blue.
6. What color is your hair? Use a predicate adjective. Example: My hair is brown.
7. Write ten sentences that describe your personality. Begin each sentence with a prepositional phrase. Example: At school I am friendly.
8. What did you see when you first awakened this morning? Use the word saw with a noun object. Example: I saw the pink curtain.
9. What clothes did you put on this morning that you especially like? Use and label a transitive verb. Example: I put on my corduroy jacket.
10. What did you eat for breakfact this morning? Use three objects of a transitive verb, label it, and punctuate the series of nouns correctly. Underline and label each noun. Example: I ate oatmeal, toast, and butter.
11. Who is your closest friend in this room? Use a predicate noun. Example: My closest friend is Mary.
12. Define the word son, daughter, maturity, beauty, friendship, citizen, or student in a sentence. Use a predicate noun. Open your sentence with the words "To me." Example: To me a son is a boy who tries to understand his father's struggles.
13. What river have you crossed? Open with a prepositional phrase telling when. Mark your verb transitive or intransitive. Example: In October 1956, I crossed the Colorado River.
14. Describe an action of yours that took place today. Open with a present participle. Example: Opening the garage door, I back out the car.

Figure 1. A Grammatical Autobiography

15. Write a sentence describing your dad or mother at the dinner table. Use at least one nominative absolute. Example: My dad ate slowly, laying down his fork now and then, smiling at my mother, his laughing blue glance sweeping around the table.
16. What occupation do several of your family follow? Name four relatives and tell what occupation each follows. Use predicate nouns and underline them. Example: My uncle is a locomotive engineer.
17. What three sounds do you like? Use three gerunds as objects of your verb. Example: I like the pattering of rain on my window, the crackling of a wood fire, the humming of a motor.
18. What activity did you enjoy most as a child of ten or twelve? Use a gerund as the object of your verb. Example: I like swimming in the Y.M.C.A. pool.
19. What are ten ambitions you cherish? Use infinitive phrases only. (These will later be used in sentences.
20. What job have you had that you like best? Use an intransitive verb. Example: I worked in a clothing store.
21. What three colors did you see today? Answer with the transitive verb saw. Example: I saw the blue of the sky, the green of the grass on our front lawn, the black of the tar on the roadway.
22. Write a sentence about your use of money beginning with although. Example: Although I do not make money easily, I always spend it fast.
23. Write a sentence opening with an as or even as clause, followed by a nominative absolute. Describe a moment you remember in a sentence like the following from Katherin Anne Porter's, "Maria Conception": "Even as she was falling asleep, head bowed over the child, she was still aware of the strange, wakeful happiness."
24. Describe an action you remember, in a sentence constructed like the following from Joseph Conrad, Nigger of the Narcissus: "Streaming with perspiration, we swarmed up the rope, and, coming into the blast of cold wind, gasped like men plunged into icy water."
25. Choose a sentence or passage from a book that represents to you an experience you recall vividly. Write a sentence of your own about the experience, using the same grammatical construction that your writer used.

Figure 1. Continued

Blotz Poem
Line 1: Name your creature. (This is _____)
Line 2: Tell where your creature lives. (All words begin with the first letter of the creature's name. Include at least four words.)
Line 3: Tell what your creature eats. (Use the same first letter. Include at least four items.)
Line 4: Tell what your creature likes. (Same first letter. Include four things.)
Line 5: Tell something about your creature. (Same first letter. Include three things.)
Line 6: Tell about something your creature did to you.

Five Senses Poem
Line 1: Tell what color an emotion or idea is.
Line 2: Tell what the emotion tastes like.
Line 3: Tell what the emotion sounds like.
Line 4: Tell what the emotion smells like.
Line 5: Tell what the emotion look like.
Line 6: Tell what the emotion makes you feel like.

Diamond Poem:
Line 1: Write a noun. (At this point you may wish to skip down to line 7 and write the opposite of this noun.)
Line 2: Write two adjectives describing the noun.
Line 3: Write three -ing words that describe the noun.
Line 4: Write four nouns. The first two should relate to the noun in line 1, the second two, to the noun in line 7.
Line 5: Write three -ing words indicating change toward the word on line 7.
Line 6: Write two adjectives describing the bottom noun.
Line 7: Write a noun that is the opposite of your subject.

Cinquain Poem
Line 1: Write a noun--your subject, one word.
Line 2: Write two adjectives--words that describe the noun. Separate the two adjectives by a comma.
Line 3: Write three verbs that tell what the noun in the first line does. Separate the verbs by commas.
Line 4: Write a thought about your noun. A short phrase will do nicely.
Line 5: Repeat the word you wrote on the first line or write a synonym.

Figure 2. Structured Poems

PART TWO

IDEAS TO KEEP GOING

PLANNING COMPOSITION EXPERIENCES FOR A BEGINNING ESSAY CLASS

Maida Draker
Austin High School

All too often the teacher, faced with her first set of papers from students, is overwhelmed. The papers show evidence of weakness in every area: clear thinking, organizing, clarity, mechanical errors. There are papers that say nothing rather well and papers that say nothing poorly. Where to begin? The feeling is often that of doing battle with a hydra: when one weakness is decapitated, two others grow in its place. Having a clear idea of what's important will help the teacher immeasurably in planning the attack or -- in less pugilistic terms -- the sequence of instruction in composition.

As she begins thinking about assignments, perhaps the most basic question the teacher must ask is, "What is my primary purpose in giving the assignment?" An understanding of logical sequence of expectations will help clarify the purpose of each assignment given. Students might first be encouraged to write with fluency, the be led to consider structure and completeness. Only then will the teacher require them to strive for correctness and effectiveness.

The next area the teacher must consider is the response or evaluation to be given. Since the first goal is fluency, planning no response or evaluation for the first few assignments is perfectly legitimate. Other possibilities include peer response,

self-evaluation, and teacher response and/or evaluation. Within each of those response patterns lies the possibility of giving only positive feedback or of giving evaluation based on limited criteria.

A third consideration in planning assignments is the aim of the discourse itself. The student must have a clear idea of both his purpose and his audience if he is to write an effective paper. Experience in writing expressive, persuasive, and informative discourse would seem desirable to accomplish fluency, structure, and so on. A comprehensive theory of discourse, such as Kinneavy's, can serve as the framework for the course, as the following discussion shows. The ideas and terms for different aims and modes are from Kinneavy.[1]

Expressive wrting is a good beginning point. Students may write five or six times without any feedback at all from the teacher. The purpose is to help them achieve fluency and to overcome the inhibitions that have been built up over the years because their writing has been "purged" with the blood-letting red pen. In expressive writing, the student will be his or her own audience; peers may read the papers if that procedure has been planned. These writings may be a combination of unfocused, timed writings or focused writings stimulated by the use of pictures, short films, or poetry. Planned response strategies can include self-evaluation, peer reading without response, finally peer reading with positive response only. The self-evaluation might be as simple as having the student count and record the number of words he has just written.

Persuasive writing is a logical next step because students already have a great deal of experience with persuasion. Daily, they are bombarded with persuasion, and, of course, they use it themselves many times each day. They are forever trying to talk people into things. They try to persuade parents to let them use the car; teachers, to accept late papers; friends, to go to a particular place. Setting up similar siutations would enable students to approach the task comfortably, drawing on their own experience. If the students have been writing only in short, timed periods, that structure can be continued. Although the situation feels familiar and secure, students are now moving to a different aim, and they are now writing to a specified audience beyond themselves.

The peer response group can evaluate (though it need not be called that) by simply selecting the most persuasive paper -- a relatively unthreatening evaluation. Having the most persuasive papers read before the entire class is fun and less intimidating if the student selects a friend to role-play the person he or she is attempting to convince. The two can sit at the front of the room and the activity takes on the aura of fun and entertainment.

In such an atmosphere, the teacher discusses qualities of good persuasion, the communication triangle, kinds of discourse, and methods of persuasion. Students generate topics for future persuasive papers by searching for strong opinions that they hold. Gradually, the teacher's expectations expand from fluency to completeness, structure, and correctness. Effectiveness can be considered with a simple stylistic editing of "I believe" or

"in my opinion I think. . ." By the time students have written about several of their strong opinions, they have structured their persuasion into three to five-paragraph themes.

A part of effective persusasion is, of course, understanding the power of emotional words, and a parallel study of word connotations accompanies the study of persuasion. The study of word connotations should be initiated with a brief return to expression writing, using students' responses to emotional pictures. Such responses will undoubtedly reveal the students' use of "loaded" words. Students can also analyze the emotional persuasion found in advertisements and other persuasive discourse.

Such analyses have laid a good foundation for involvement in informative writing. The student can now analyze a persuasive discourse supplied by the teacher and report his findings in an informative paper. That paper may take the guise of a simple, one-paragraph paper in the beginning. The study could culminate with a test situation in which the student is provided with a persuasive discourse to read, analyze, and write about, during one class period.

Future papers may stress particular modes. Students can develop their points by describing, narrating, classifying, or evaluating. Always, however, they should have a clear understanding of whether they are writing the paper to persuade or inform their readers, or simply and primarily to express their own thoughts and feelings. In addition, they must have a clear understanding of their audience.

If the teacher clearly understands her goal in making a particular assignment, and students clearly understand their aims and audiences, perhaps some of the fog will clear and the frustrations subside. Students will realize that they write compositions to express and communicate ideas, not just to "write writing."

Reference

[1]James L. Kinneavy, A Theory of Discourse: Aims of Discourse (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971).

THE STRUCTURED CHARACTER SKETCH

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Reagan Senior High School

As teachers of literature, we naturally ask our students to analyze the characters of the various stories, plays, and novels they are studying. We want our students to be able to delve into motivation and explain, often in writing, such personality intricacies as Tybalt's hotheadedness, Romeo's seeming immaturity and impulsiveness, or Juliet's transformation from a girl to a woman. But alas, reality has a way of throwing cold water on such rose-colored expectations and, unfortunately, the average high school ninth grader cannot write a perceptive character sketch without a structured approach to character analysis. A simple, structured approach to the character sketch can provide the needed anchor for the young, inexperienced writer.

Such a simple structure, which promotes a thoughtful analysis, consists of three paragraphs, with each paragraph developing a facet of character:

Paragraph 1. Identify your subject and give a physical description.

Paragraph 2. Describe a typical activity, situation, job, or hobby which occupies your subject's time.

Paragraph 3. Describe the response of other people to your subject.

After I present this brief outline to the class as an introduction to their first character sketch, we consider the implications of each paragraph and discuss how the basic idea of each can be developed.

The physical description of a person may not seem at first to be a part of character analysis, but one need not think too long to see the possible relationships between physical attributes and personality. To generalize almost to the point of stereotype, a tall person might be one who commands a situation, a woman who wears flashy clothes and make-up obviously has some attention-getting purpose in mind. And, of course, the expressions on a person's face directly result from the inner person, or his character.

How a person occupies his time is also a reflection of his character. Again obvious examples in class discussion help students see how they can analyse the person they are writing about. I use examples such as the egghead student who has time only for homework, and the reverse of the egghead--the extra-curricular nut who is so busy running, or participating in, the social life of the school that he ends up flunking his courses. As specified in the assignment, the student should also discuss a a person's job or hobby in this paragraph as well, since how a person chooses to work and play results from his character or personality.

How the subject of the sketch relates to other people is the topic of the third paragraph. We discuss such examples as the loner, the social gadfly, the everybody-loves-him, nobody-hates-him type, and so on.

After discussing the basic requirements of the assignment, we then proceed to be more specific. For their first character sketch, I ask the students to write about someone they know, but not a close friend or relative, not their best friend, and not a family member they live with or see frequently. This requirement helps sharpen their observation powers and hopefully eliminates the gushiness which frequently creeps in when a ninth grader writes about "my best friend, Suzy."

For the second assignment, students apply the character analysis to literature; they work with a short story with fairly definitive characters. Some good examples are "The Slip-over Sweater" by Jesse Steward, or "Haircut" by Ring Lardner. Students must choose one character, then (1) read carefully and search the story for any physical descriptions which might be scattered throughout; (2) take note of activities, actions, or jobs which might occupy the character; and (3) notice how other characters in the story relate to the character. I add a slightly different dimension to the third paragraph. The student may give his own reaction to the character.

I also use the basic character analysis structure with the study of Romeo and Juliet. Students must discuss physical appearance based on the mental picture they develop for a character. They must identify both qualities and faults. Much later in the year I assign a book report which contains the direction "Write a character sketch of a major character." With all the practice, most students sail through this fourth character sketch with no trouble at all.

This simple structure has worked well for me, and I like its adaptability. I have also been pleased to see students grow in their analytic and critical skills with each additional writing assignment.

A DISCURSIVE APPROACH TO AN ADVANCED STUDY OF GRAMMAR IN PREPARATION FOR BEGINNING COMPOSITION

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An advanced study of grammar is a course which should precede beginning composition since the objectives of that course are the foundations upon which beginning composition can firmly build. In an advanced study of grammar, the student learns to write the different types of sentences, to expand these simple sentences by adding modifying words and phrases, to combine sentences while avoiding run-ons and comma splices and to subordinate ideas and to clarify ideas by writing complex sentences. The student is first presented with the method of formulating these different kinds of sentence constructions and secondly is provided with models of the various sentences. Then, if the advanced sutdy of grammar is taught discursively, students will be prepared to, and will have actually begun to, develop their skills in writing narration, description, and exposition.

The following presents activities for developing sentence writing skills and understanding of grammatical structures.

The Four Basic Sentences

Declarative: I want the ring.
He ate his dinner.

Interrogative: Did he leave his books?
Where has he gone?

Exclamatory: Fire!
I need help!

Imperative: Leave me alone!
Close the door.

Activity Write a dialogue in which you will use these types of sentences. Use at least 2 of each type. Punctuate correctly. (Note: This is a good time to teach punctuation as used with dialogue.)

Example John said, "I have a major exam tomorrow. Will you help me study for it?"

"You need help!" exclaimed Sue. "I'm failing the class!" "I need your help."

"Meet me at the Dairy Queen at 7:30," replied John. "Will that be okay with you?" he asked.

"Come to my house. It will be quieter." Sue answered.

Adding Single Word Adjectives and Adverbs

The hungry men ate quickly.
adj. adv.

The calico cat was lonely.
adj. adj.

The colorful kite flew high.
adj. adv.

He returned later.
adv.

I will go home.
adv.

She is very pretty.
adv. adj.

Activity Write a paragraph on a sport such as racing, skiing, roller skating, parachuting, or horse jumping, in which you will describe the event, describe the participant, and describe the audience watching. Use as many one word adjectives and one word adverbs as possible for a descriptive paragraph. Write 7 to 9 sentences. Punctuate correctly. (Note: This is the time to teach the use of commas between equal adjectives.)

Example The hot, sweating player threw the brown, oblong ball. It was quickly caught and tucked away. The excited spectators went wild. They jumped and down. They were

uncontrollable. This national pastime is called football. It is the most favorite American sport.

Activity Write a narrative paper in which you tell a story about a trip that you have taken. Also describe one particular spot that you really thought was great. Use as many one word adjectives and one word adverbs as you can. Write at least one page in length. Punctuate correctly. Try to have a beginning, middle, and end to your story. (Note: This is a good time to discuss the use of indention.)

Adding Modifying Phrases

Prepositional phrases:	During the rainstorm, he sat in a corner on the pillow by himself.
	Above the door, a large spider made a web.
Participial phrases:	Hoping to catch a fly, the spider sat waiting.
	The tired spider sat waiting for a fly.
Infinitive phrases:	They are going to go home.
	I went to see a movie.
	His decision to enter the contest was approved.

Activity Write a paragraph on sports, parties, holidays, fads, or courses, in which you will try to use as many modifying phrases as possible. Use at least 2 of each. Write 7 to 9 sentences. Punctuate correctly.

Example Growing abundantly in forests are all kinds of trees. We deliberately walk through a forest to see the trees. Often we find stripped areas. Disappointed, we head in another direction. Fires will often cause the destruction of the overgrown trees. A camper having been careless with his campfire will be the direct cause. His choice to build a campfire was unwise.

Activity Write a narrative paper in which you tell a story about a fantasy or a dream you may have had. Use as many one word adjectives, one word adverbs, and modifying phrases as you can. Write at least one page in length. Punctuate correctly. Try to have a beginning, middle, and end to your story.

Combining Sentences to Make Compound Sentences

Using coordinating conjunctions: He is my brother, and she is my sister.

He is my uncle, but she is not my aunt.

Using correlative conjunctions: Either my cat has caught a skunk, or she smells bad.

Not only did I wash my hair, but I also did my nails.

Using the adverbial connective: This is my party; however, Jane has a birthday, too.

Using the semicolon: It is hot; it is dry.

(Note: This is the time to explain the difference between compound sentence elements and compound sentences, and to discuss the use of the comma and semicolon.)

Activity Practice sentence combining.[1]

Example We can go to the movies.
We can stay home. (or)

I like spinach.
I don't like cauliflower. (but)

Activity Plan a writing exercise in which everything taught up to this point will be used at least once.

Example The sky was a lovely blue, but the ground was a dusty brown. It had not rained for three weeks. Not only were the flowers dying in the yard, but also the vegetables were dying in the garden. Looking at the sky, John hoped to find a cloud.

Subordinating and Modifying Clauses

Adverb Clauses: Although I was late, I did not miss the bus.

When the ship left, it forgot the captain.

Unless the team wins this game, the chances of getting a trophy will be lost.

He does not like to go since John will be there.

Adjective clauses: He is the man who stole the tools.

They caught the dog which bit the little boy.

(Note: Explain the use of which, that, who, whom, and whose as introductory words of the adjective clause and the use of the comma.)

Activity Practice subordinating and clarifying ideas by sentence combining.

Example I went to the football game.
I left at halftime. (although)

You came home.
The cat was in the house. (when)

I have plenty of time.
I will fail the test. (unless)

This is the man.
The man had a gun.
The man robbed the store.

Activity Begin a paragraph with a subordinating clause. Use one of each construction that has been learned up to this point at least once.

Example Since I lost my watch, I have been late everyday to class. I can not seem to be on time. Mentally, my mind is set to be five to ten minutes late, and I can not recondition it.

Activity Develop a thesis and support it.

Evaluation

A checklist can be used for peer and/or teacher evaluation. The checklist below is for the activities related to the study of the four basic sentences:

Declarative
Imperative
Interrogative
Exclamatory
of ?
of !
of .
quotation marks used correctly

Reference

[1]William Strong, Sentence Combining: A Composing Book (New York: Random House, 1973).

S.P.A.: DEVELOPING FLUENCY, SELF-MANAGEMENT, AND CONFIDENCE IN WRITING

Stacey Hasbrook Sanders
Del Valle High School

Most teacher have the habit of classifying students as gifted, slow, dumb, lazy, or smart. Two years agao I replaced those titles with "those who want to" and "those who don't." This change led to the development of Special Projects Assignment or S.P.A.

Many students in the first two years of high school have three main problems. They lack the ability to write freely and quickly because of their fear of writing and lack of practice. This lack of experience leaves the students with a very low level of self-confidence in the classroom. They rarely function at full potential. The last problem is the ineffective use of time in the classroom and the lack of self-control at home to accomplish assigned tasks.

The most important aspect of S.P.A. is student choice, both in projects and the decision of actual participation. The greatest success can occur only if the students decide for themselves to become part of the group. It becomes a question of whether the students want to accept the responsibility for much more work than is required of the rest of the class.

The first week of the project seems very chaotic, with the introduction of an entire quarter's work plus explanations and organization on the part of the students. Teacher preparation

actually starts the previous six weeks. A time chart, checklists, copies of workbooks and various files have to be organized.

Every student receives an invitation that explains in detail the duties and responsibilities to be assumed should he or she choose the project. This invitation requires an R.S.V.P. within two days. Students who choose not to participate study novels and do the regularly required work on those novels. The project people do much more.

The students in the project read the same novels as fast as they can and then move to individual and group projects on the books. These projects, both visual and written, require much time and creativity. While they work, each student compiles a list of questions about the reading. When every S.P.A. member is finished reading, we hold a round-table discussion in which background information is given and the various questions are addressed. These meetings usually last two days but can be extended if members need more clarification.

Students also keep a large notebook which contains workbook writing and journal or topic entries. Joan Berbrick's Writing Creatively (Amsco School Publications), the major workbook used, covers writing skills extensively. Part one, "The Workshop," covers generating ideas, playing with words, using details, putting it all together and developing a sense of the comic. Part two, "The Studio," moves into the writing of the essay, poetry, scripts and short stories. Part three, "Publisher's Row," explains the method and routine of actually trying to sell written works.

The students are required to write five pages in the journal each week. They can write anything they desire and have several helpful sources should they not be able to think of ideas. On the desk, always available, is the "Bright Ideas" box which contains numerous index cards with ideas for writing. The students also are free to use any of the resource books in the room.

Twice a week, the students participate in a timed, focused writing. Once a week, they receive an exercise from Creative Writing which involves a picture, thought-provoking questions, and a choice of writing assignments. Once during the six weeks, the students choose a picture from a file and write a short story about it.

Evaluation during this mass of work is relatively simple and always involves the student, his group, and the teacher. The students have an individual checklist to record completed work. A master checklist is also kept to help the teacher advise students of their progress. The groups are required to give an evaluation of each of its members and how they functioned in the group. The student ultimately is asked to evaluate his or her work and assess a fair grade. Most hit very close to what they really deserve.

Frequent teacher checks keep students reminded of work to be done. Informal checking is done each week through casual conversation. At the end of the third week, a conference is held with each student to evaluate progress. The conference at the end of the six weeks period is to discuss grades. Again at the ninth week, progress is checked. Finally, during the twelfth week, the

student and teacher meet to discuss how much the student felt was gained by participating in S.P.A. and to decide on grades.

S.P.A. provides the practice and variation that help students develop fluency and quality in writing. Although the students have a large amount of work to do, they quickly learn exactly what needs to be done without teacher pressure, through self-management. Acceptance of and excitement about new-found responsibility and pride in accomplishment give students a feeling of confidence. What actually happens is a writing overdose--a habit that doesn't have to be kicked. The result is a large number of students hooked on writing and feeling good about it.

First Year of S.P.A. (1977-78)

Teacher estimation of participation - 100% of those anticipated

Dropout rate - two students

Students asking later to be included - five

Students doing some projects, extra credit - twelve

Failure - one group; incomplete projects (2) due to individual conflicts, dealt with individually

no one completed Writing Creatively, too long for 12 weeks

Time involvement - students requested two weekly sessions until 6:00; not mandatory

Project - not perfect but beautiful, 100% creative efforts

Grades - Approximately 90% A's and B's; at least half came up entire letter

Attitude - very happy over accomplishments; proud that I bragged to everyone I could force to listen; at least 50% said they now enjoyed writing and would continue on their own.

SELF-DIRECTED PACKET: MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN

Donna Gage
Grisham Middle School

Rationale

This three day section is a small portion is a larger thematic unit. Its purpose is to give students an opportunity to survey some literature and films about man's inhumanity to man and society. Much of literature does not hold relevancy for today's youth, for they are far removed from World War II, from the quaint village of "The Lottery," and from Whitman's America. Therefore, it is necessary to allow those students to find relevancy through the lessons of literature and history by comparing and contrasting the horrors of the past to the everyday occurences within their own immediate world. Through this process, students examine their own society, the high school, and find that inhumanities exist even in this microcosm. The class discussion and peer group sessions allow the student an opportunity to verbalize his thoughts and opinions and to benefit by an exchange of values and ideas. Following this process, he is finally asked to write a persuasive essay outlining his own values on this topic and to present evidence from literature and peer discussion which support or change his own values.

Objectives

Students will (1) read and analyze the inhumanities in "I Sit and Look Out," by Walt Whitman, (2) evaluate inhumanity as it exists in their immediate world, and (3) write a persuasive essay on Man's Inhumanity to Man.

Activities

The teacher (1) provides each students with a copy of "I Sit and Look Out" by Walt Whitman and a copy of the three day study guide, (2) acts as a facilitator during the group activities, and (3) answers any questions posed by students.

The teacher should avoid lecturing or imposing values. The strongest emphasis here is on discussion and inquiry as a prelude to the writing of the persuasive essay.

The instruction presented to the students follows. It includes specific criteria for evaluating all activities. (Similar literary selections or films could be substituted.)

Students English II

Topic Man's Inhumanity to Man

Time Three 40-50 minute sessions

DAY ONE

Rationale Throughout our study of this topic, we have looked at the ways man perpetuates inhumanity to man. Through reading "The Lottery," we have seen the holiday atmosphere surrounding the annual ritual stoning of a citizen in a small town. Likewise, we have witnessed the controversial revenge of war victims against the German war criminals in the film "Trial at Nuremberg." Both "The Lottery," and "Trial at Nuremberg" depict situations that horrify all mankind. However, other forms of inhumanity exist as Walt Whitman explains in "I Sit and Look Out." Are these inhumanities Whitman enumerates as horrendous as those shown in "The Lottery" and "Trial at Nuremberg?"

Objective After reading the poem, analyze the inhumanities in "I Sit and Look Out," orally and in writing.

Activities 1. Read the poem silently.

2. Write a one sentence statement which gives your opinion on these instances of man's inhumanity

to man. Do not share your paper or opinion with anyone else at this time.

3. Join your peer group as soon as you have finished reading the poem.

4. As a group, list all instances of inhumanity which Whitman has included in the poem. This may be in the form of a list using one or two words per instance. This activity should take no more than five (5) minutes.

5. Discuss your list and come to a group concensus on whether these are actually considered inhumanities by your group's standards.

6. Be prepared to present your list and your defense of your group concensus to the class. (This will be done the last 15 minutes of class.)

Evaluation

7. You will be evaluated on your participation and contribution to your individual group.

8. You will be evaluated on your group's ability to reach a concensus.

9. You will be evaluated on your defense of your group's position.

I Sit and Look Out

Walt Whitman

I sit and look out upon all the sorrows of the world, and upon all oppression and shame,
I hear secret convulsive sobs from young men at anguish with themselves, remorseful after deeds done,
I see in low life the mother misused by her children, dying, neglected, gaunt, desperate,
I see the wife misused by her husband, I see the treacherous seducer of young women,
I mark the ranklings of jealousy and unrequited love attempted to be hid, I see these sights on the earth,
I see the workings of battle, pestilence, tyranny, I see martyrs and prisoners,
I observe a famine at sea, I observe the sailors casting lots who shall be kill'd to preserve the lives of the rest,
I observe the slights and degradation cast by arrogant persons upon laborers, the poor, and upon negroes, and the like;
All these--all the meanness and agony without end I sitting look out upon,
See, hear, and am silent.

DAY TWO

Rationale — You have now read three pieces of literature which represent the theme of man's inhumanity to man. In these selections you have looked at situations which involved people in far away places and long ago times. The question you must answer today is, "Does inhumanity exist in my life, or in my world?"

Objective — Students will discuss inhumanity as it exists in their immediate world.

Activities

1. Your group will brainstorm the subject of inhumanity by listing all of the inhumanities you can think of at high school. (5 minutes)
2. Each group will present its list to the class orally. Lists may be posted on bulletin boards if you wish. (20 minutes)
3. As a class, rank the top five inhumanities at your high school. Write these on the board. (10 minutes)

Evaluation

4. You will be evaluated on your group's brainstorming session. Brainstorming means that suggestions are accepted without criticism or reaction, and that each member contributes to the session. Your group must complete the activity in the allotted time.
5. You will be evaluated on your group defense of your suggestions and your conduct toward other group contributions and responses.

DAY THREE

Rationale

For the last two days you have been involved in a discussion of inhumanity as it existed in the past and as it exists in your life today. During that time, you have drawn upon thematic literature which provided strong examples of inhumanity. Most of these literary examples presented strong emotional responses to each individual. You have shared your values and your reasoning with members of the class and you have focused on group concensus. Today you will be asked to draw upon the literature you have read, the discussion you have participated in, and finally on your own system of values to summarize your concept of inhumanity.

Objective

The student will write a persuasive essay on man's inhumanity to man.

Activities

1. The persuasive essay is to be 300-500 words in length.
2. Use the one sentence statement which you wrote in Activity two, day one, as a starting point for your essay. Open it now and quickly write yes, I believe this statement, or no, I no longer believe this statement.
3. After you have completed step two, quickly jot down factors from the literature, film, and discussions which have led you to your decision. (You should have at least three points which you develop for your essay.)

4. Begin writing. Remember your essay must have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. You must write it persuasively. Try to change someone's mind.

Evaluation

5. You will be evaluated on the following points:

1. Mechanics and usage. Use comma rule handout if necessary and the dictionary for spelling.

2. Clarity of thought and logic in presenting your argument.

3. Introduction, a body, a conclusion.

4. Illustration or development of three points.

5. Must finish the essay during the class period.

6. You need to remember that the length of the essay is a guide from which you are to begin. It is not necessary to count words. Rather the word length is given as a guideline. This is the average length of an essay which can be written in one class period. Yours may slightly exceed the suggested length, but it should not be much shorter than 300 words.

7. You will be expected to use quotations from the literature or film, references from the discussion, or points from the lists as evidence in your essay. Of course, you may

paraphrase ideas, characters, or situations found in any of the literature studied in this section.

RELATING WRITING FOR LITERATURE STUDY

Estefana Carrasco
Bedicheck Junior High School

"Relating Writing for Literature Study" is a unit I prepare for my seventh grade English students. It consists of a sequence of learning activities leading to the utlimate purpose of giving the students the appropriate tools for answering essay questions related to the unit. It is a mythology unit in which mythology is studied from a variety of viewpoints. Activities include: doing research on an extended definition of mythology, reading Greek and Roman myths, viewing films and filmstrips, and listening to myths from cassette tapes, as well as writing assignments, discussions, oral reports and opportunities for creative work.

After the students have done research for a clear concept of what mythology is, every student turns in a short finished paper to be checked and returned for class discussion. In this discussion session, points are compared and the whole class arrives at a general definition. Through discussion, low level students who could not carry out the research assignment take down notes and formulate definitions consistent with their level of understanding.

The reading and exploring of myths are activities that follow the research, and myths of gods, goddesses, heroes or any mythological topic are read. The students read from a classroom set of paperback books on myths. Reading is done in and out of class. Students are assigned to check out books from the school library and are encouraged to use the public library.

One assignment is to list the names of Greek and Roman gods, goddesses and heroes, their duties, and the deeds for which the heroes are known. A second assignment requires achievement of qualities of an effective summary. If the student is unable to carry out the assignment, a discussion is set up, and model summaries, as well as good student summaries, are analyzed, and compared. This activity is done in preparation for a major writing assignment from the reading: five to ten finished summaries of myths of the student's choice. Low-level students are able to read myths of one or one and a half pages and accomplish the writing task.

The teacher, now, moves the students into the audio-visual activities where they will have an opportunity to utilize other sensory perceptions. Films and filmstrips of Greek and Roman mythology are shown. Filmstrips lend themselves to more specific study since it is easy to stop the projector and discuss, or to go back and clarify any misinterpreted point.

Taped readings of myths create a lively and enthusiastic atmosphere in the classroom. The students listen to the story for the first time just for the pleasure of following the plot and experiencing the story-telling art. Discussion sessions follow. If an argument on any point develops, the second playing resolves it. Students take notes, and from these notes, they select a topic to develop in a finished paragraph, which is graded. Before writing, students compare and discuss their notes. One requirement for the paragraph is that the content must be true to the original. Other learning activities the

students enjoy doing are tracing maps of ancient Greece and coloring or painting them and making posters of gods or heroes.

Through these activities students are prepared to respond successfully to sophisticated essay questions, such as the following:

> Write a summary of The Adventures of Ulysses by listing main events that will form a plot. Include the reason for Ulysses' wanderings after the Cyclops' episode.
>
> From your two lists of similarities and contrasts on the myths about Phaethon and Icarus, select three points from each list and write a comparison and contrast composition.
>
> Criteria: introduce your subject
> write in complete sentences
> begin sentences with capital letters
> punctuate
> talk about only the six points you have selected
> give your composition a concluding sentence

Student Responses

The story of Ulysses was written by Homer. The story's real name is The Odyssey.

Ulysses was a Greek soldier. He fought in the Trojan War. The Trojan War was started when Paris (a Trojan) stole Helen (a Greek princess). When the Greeks won and burned Troy, Ulysses started home.

The Trojan War took ten years. For another ten years Ulysses wandered all over before he got home. Ulysses and his men fought terrible mosters, witches, and got into trouble with gods. When he got home Ulysses was the only one left.

Ulysses's wife, Penelope, was being courted by a hundred men. Ulysses was believed dead and had left a rich widow.

With the help of his son and a swineherd, he fought all the suitors off.

Ulysses had wandered for ten years because the Cyclops, Polyphemus, was a son of Poseidon and on one of the islands Ulysses's men landed on, the Cyclops captured them. Ulysses and his men escaped by blinding the Cyclops's one eye. The Cyclops prayed to his father to make Ulysses suffer and Poseidon did. That is why Ulysses had these wanderings.

FILM WRITING

Composition on "The Odyssey" Part I and III

The "Odyssey" is a poem written by a Greek poet named Homer. He wrote this poem over three thousand years ago.

The "Odyssey" has three interlocking themes. The first theme is about a soldier who returns home; theme number two is about a boy growing up, and the third theme tells of Odyssues' wandering through strange and evil placed.

This third theme is fantastic. It is said to be the first real fiction story written.

SUMMARY

Prometheus was a young Titan. He gave man fire. Zeus was mad. He did not want man to have fire. He chained Prometheus up to a rock and an eagle clawed him. He stayed there for centuries until Heracles rescued him and got him down.

SUMMARY

Pandora was a girl that Hephaestus made. She was made to punish man for accepting fire. Hermes gave her a box that she was never to open. She opened it and all the diseases, ills, sorrows, and deaths crawled around. One did not get out so we still have hope.

USE OF DIALOGUE IN NARRATIVE WRITING

Annie January
Del Valle Middle School

A unit on narrative writing, with special attention to dialogue, provides an effective way of relating development of writing and reading skills. Such a unit, designed for eighth-grade students, emphasises concepts about the effects of dialogue, the use of dialogue to reveal action and characterization, and plot development in narratives. The unit culminates with the composing of narratives out of the students' experiences. The following describes the day-to-day lessons for the unit.

STEP 1. DIALOGUE

Purposes

1. Students will be able to recognize the effects that dialogue has on a story.
2. Students will be able to use correct punctuation in writing dialogue.

Day 1

1. Review the mechanics involved in the writing of direct quotations and of dialogue.
2. Use a selection from the literature book, Adventures for Readers: Book Two, to illustrate that action makes dialogue more effective.

Day 2

Discuss the story with the class, calling special attention to ways in which the author includes action in the conversations.

Ask the students to find and real aloud illustrations. Call attention to the limited use of explanatory words (he said; asked John), and the close relationships of the action to words of the conversation.

Allow time for some informal practice by the students in using action in very brief dialogues--on their paper, the chalkboard or overhead projector.

Example: John grasped the bat tighter and beat the air with it. "Come on! Pitch me a curve!"

Day 3

Assign the writing of a dialogue to include action with some degree of fluency. Help the students think of some situations calling for action:

1. You have just discovered your brother or sister apparently (actually) "snooping" in your room.
2. You are at your locker, a bottom locker; you are in a hurry, and the person who has the top locker is (is not) cooperating with you.
3. Someone has just surprised you with a gift.
4. You are explaining to a teacher why you do not have your homework.
5. You are explaining to your parents why you made a low grade in English.

Suggest to the students that, before writing, they ask themselves these questions.

1. What would I/he be likely to say in this situation, and how would I/he act?
2. What would the other person be likely to say and how would he/she act in response to my actions and words?

Have one or two dialogues written on the chalkboard. Ask the class to check on the mechanical structure and comment on ways of improving the dialogue in relation to the action.

Ask each student to have a neatly written copy of his dialogue prepared before the next class meeting.

Day 4 Develop with the class two guidelines for evaluating dialogue:

1. Has the writer effectively included action?
2. Has the writer used correct punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing?

Arrange for students to evaluate one another's papers, according to established guides. After the students have made any necessary corrections, have several of the better examples read aloud and posted on the bulletin board. Then have all the dialogues filed in the students' individual folders.

STEP 2. CHARACTERIZATION THROUGH DIALOGUE

Purposes

1. Students will strengthen their skill in the use of action in dialogue and increase their mastery of the mechanics involved in writing dialogue.
2. Students will be able to write dialogue that shows character.

Day 1. Assign the reading of a story from the literature textbook that contains some dialogue which reveals character ("My Friend Flicka," in Adventures for Readers: Book 2 is an example).

Discuss the story with the class -- directing attention of the students to those passages that reveal some clues to the personality of each of the characters.

Ask the students to locate other passages in the story that reveal character traits and to identify these traits. Lead the class to the realization that, in a well-written dialogue, the words spoken by each character are believable.

Ask the students to skim through the story and find other examples of "natural everyday" langauge. Caution them, however, that excessive use of slang lessens the effectiveness of dialogue.

Ask the students to bring to class a picture which meets the following requirements. The picture:

1. suggests an incident involving not more than three people.
2. suggests something that has a specific point (humorous, embarrassing, exciting).

3. suggests some possibilities for action.
4. provides an opportunity to reveal character through conversation.

Day 2 If possible, distribute some duplication copies of student-writen models of conversations. Give students time to read the dialogues carefully and to choose the ones which they consider the best. Tell them to be specific in their comments and in their suggestions for improvement.

Write on the chalkboard the following guidelines writing a dialogue:

1. Does the conversation begin in such a manner that the reader does not feel that he/she has missed something important?
2. Has the writer promoted reader interest through the skillful use of action?
3. Has the writer let the reader know about an outstanding characteristic of one of the characters?
4. Are the punctuation and the paragraphing accurate?

Day 3 Review thoroughly the established guides for writing dialogue. Stress especially the fact that the student is to attempt to show that one of the persons possesses a particular trait. Supervise the writing of the rough draft during the regular class period.

Day 4 Continue to supervise the writing as students carefully revise the rough draft according to the established guides for writing dialogue. Emphasize careful proofreading before submitting theme for evaluation.

STEP 3. BRIEF NARRATIVE

Purposes:

1. Students will be able to write in chronological order a brief narrative based on personal experience.

2. Students will gain further experience in making use of the skills involved in writing dialogue.

Day 1 Suggest to the students that everyone has a story to tell. Such questions as these may recall interesting situations to mind:

1. When you meet your friends at school Monday morning, what do you talk about?

2. Are there times when you can hardly wait to tell your friends something that happened to you? Think of the times when something funny, something exciting, something frightening, or something embarrassing happened.

Lead the class to a realization that being able to write one of these stories well could improve their skill in letter writing and other types of writing. Develop the idea that those who can tell about events clearly and without rambling get the point of the story across most effectively.

Ask two or three students to relate an incident that has happened to each of them. You may wish to encourage the class by relating an incident of your own.

Day 2

If possible, distribute some mimeographed copies of student-written narratives. Stress that the story leads up to the most interesting part of the climax. Explain that the writer's whole purpose is to build up to this point to such an extent that it produces an immediate effect on his reader: laughter, sympathy, sadness, or relief. Lead the class to see that in a really good story, the writer includes only those events that build up to the climax.

Point out that the opening sentences must let the reader know who, what, when, and where. In other words, the author must set the stage.

Discuss the endings of the stories, to demonstrate that the end comes quickly and reveals the writer's reaction to the main incident.

Write the following plan on the chalkboard:

1. The opening--time, place, characters
2. The incident
   a. The moments just before the main event or incident (only those events which help to produce the desired effect of the climax)
   b. Description of the incident, leading to a climax
3. The ending--the reaction of the storyteller to the incident

Day 3

Review with the class the preceding day's instruction. Develop with the class the following guidelines for narrative writing:

1. Does the writer capture the reader's interest through a well-chosen title and a strong opening?
2. Has the writer told just enough of the background of the situation to make the main event clear to the reader?

3. Does the main event give the reader a definite feeling of happiness, excitement, fear, disappointment, or other emotion?
4. Has the writer included enough dialogue to make the story lively?
5. Does the story end quickly and reveal the reaction of the storyteller to the main incident?

Point out that the beginning narrative writer should write about a personal experience. Ask each student to think of some incident that has happened to him and decide what reaction he would want to produce in the reader; for example, that it was a happy, an exciting, a humiliating, or an embarrassing situation.

Suggest that the students begin by filling in details in the story plan developed on the preceding day, working backward from the climax.

Supervise this activity; ask two or three students to write parts of their plans on the chalkboard. Elicit comments and suggestions from the class as a help for all the students.

Day 4

Review with the class the guides developed for writing a narrative. Emphasize the fourth point, concerning dialogue.

Assign the writing of a narrative composition based on the story plan prepared by the student on the previous day. Supervise the writing of the first draft of the composition.

Day 5

Supervise the writing of corrections and revisions in the first draft of the narrative composition. Insist that the students carefully proofread their papers before submitting them for evaluation.

Evaluate the papers and assign grades on the basis of the guides established for narrative writing.

Require that the student correct or revise their papers according to the teacher's marks and comments; then file the narratives in their individual folders. Perhaps some of the best narratives should be read aloud or placed on exhibit.

WRITING FROM READING: LOOKING AT NEW DIRECTIONS

Tom Vannatta
Crockett Senior High School

After having taught writing classes for a few years, I began to be less and less satisfied with the curriculum that I had developed. For too often I was receiving "Engfish;" the papers students were handing in made for very dull reading, while the students themselves were not dull at all. I decided it was time for the teacher to heal himself. That is, something was definitely wrong about my methodology. The results were wrong. It was true that my students were learning all the basic elements of writing: topic sentence, the five paragraph essay, transitions, connectives, supporting statements, and conclusions. But students were not learning how to assemble all the parts, with fluency and style. In other words, I was doing only half the job.

In looking for a solution, I came up with a series of observations.

> Structures of some sort are necessary in writing instruction in that structures supply learning contexts and objectives, and they act to reduce writing anxiety.
>
> Fluency should be an integral part of writing instruction, not a separate exercise. When anyone writes, he writes in a unitized fashion, drawing on many eclectic skills and areas of knowledge, assembling them almost unconsciously and automatically.
>
> Self expression is missing from far too much of writing instruction, and too little of the student's self is made use of. Further, self expression is the key to enthusiastic writing. Any writer is far more excited about himself, than he is in writing about an abstract concept outside himself. This seems so particularly important with young writers, who

have yet to have a broad range of life experiences to draw upon. For example, an adult is far more likely to be excited about world news than is a teenager.

Fluency and self expression, it follows, must be linked, especially in young writers. Traditional writing forms, while still prevalent in much of higher learning and secondary learning, do not encourage enough fluency and self expression.

In traditional writing instruction, style is taught in elemental form. This is not how the best of the world's writers learned style. They read and studied other writers, from whom they picked up things that they could imitate and integrate into their own writing. It may well be that the sense of style that is an element of mature writing can only be learned through a mimetic process.

Following the latter questions, there is one more question: What knowledge should students learn in a writing class? They should learn a basic writing consciousness or faculty that will equip them to write in wide range of applications. In other words, writing students should not receive a mere series of how-to's, but a multifaceted universally adaptable skill. Writing assignments should thus move the student progressively toward a flexible style of writing that he can actually use and feels comfortable in using.

I simplified these thoughs into a series of elements to emphasize in my writing instruction:

fluency

self expression

new writing structures

imitation of mature writing

a practical and universal writing style

Bearing these elements in mind, I developed a series of lessons in writing. all of which have these procedures:

1. Choose a reading that contains a particular style and/or structure you wish to teach.
2. Have the students do a silent reading of the material to familiarize them with the basic content.
3. Take the students through an oral reading of the writing. Point out the structures you wish them to imitate. Explain the style the author is using. Try to have the

students find some of the structure and style on their own. Give the students an actual written plan outlining the structure and style you wish them to imitate.

4. Give the students the assignment. Make very sure they understand that they are following the reading as a model. In the past I have found it very helpful to also supply student written models as well as the original. Sometimes a student can better understand an assignment if he can see how another student did it.

The Exploratory Essay

Reading: A selection From Studs Terkel's, Working.

Teaching Procedure:

Have the students read the piece silently. Then do a directed reading with the students, pointing out the structures within the article: the changing ideas, paragraph hooks, description, narration, use of examples, the changing point of view, attitude, tone, definition, and conclusion. Inform the students that the structures you are pointing out are ones that should appear in their finished essays. Do not totally explicate all the elements in the article; allow the students to discover some of them.

In dealing with the content of the article, do more than just explain. Give the students real life parallels, connecting the content to their lives. Start them thinking about what they might want to write about.

Give out the handout and explain the objectives of the assignment, making it very clear that the student is to imitate certain things in the article, and these things will be examined in grading. Discuss all the possible topics thoroughly so that any student can find something that he can be interested in.

Assignment

AIM: To explore a particular subject in a personal way.
AUDIENCE: Average American adult
FORM: Free Form, using the following ideas:

1) Paragraph by the shift of ideas, paragraph frequently.
2) Use connectives and transitions between the paragraphs so that continuity is maintained throughout the entire writing.
3) Use illustrations and examples whenever possible, avoid "preaching" and telling the reader. Instead, show the reader a vivid example.
4) If it can be seen or named, do so.
5) If this essay, the conclusion is not necessarily absolute, but at the end, the reader should feel a certain completeness in the thinking.
6) You may use first and second person pronouns. Just be careful that you do not become monotonous through repetition.

PARAGRAPH BY PARAGRAPH PLAN:

1) Create a personalized definition of the topic, one that accurately reflects your feelings and experiences.
2) Relate what personal experiences you've had with the topic.
3) Now expand beyond your own personal meanings and experiences to come up with meanings and ramifications in terms of all other people.
4) Begin summing up.
5) Reach some kind of final conclusion statement.

REQUIREMENTS: 1st draft, proofreading, and final draft
(approximate length: 3 pages)

TOPICS:

(Choose 1, or see me and negotiate.)

working	leaving childhood	scary people
loving	remembering things past	other people
learning	holding on to things	strange people
eating	letting go of someone	animals
standing out	wasting time	getting along

Satiric Essay

Reading: "A Modest Proposal," by Jonathan Swift; articles by Art Buchwald or Erma Bombeck; letters to the editor; movie satires in MAD magazine.

Teaching Procedures

First, assemble a small collection of satire. Reproduce it in a class set. Classic techniques of satire should be represented: exaggeration, praising something bad, fantasy, parody, and word play. Satire takes in a small universe of writing, so the more examples you can find the better the students will understand what it is.

Next, follow the same reading procedure as in the previous assignment. In each reading, point out what exactly makes the writing a satire. Take it from the writer's point of view. Tell the students what the writer is doing in each case. Make sure the students understand the wide variety of styles available to them. Above all, be sure to show the students in each example that satire is indirect criticism, not direct criticism.

Talk through all the topics, giving the students possible approaches along the way. Encourage them to examine life around them for subjects ripe for satire.

Assignment

AIM: To persuade using satiric technique.
AUDIENCE: average American adult - broadcast English
REQUIREMENTS: 1 satire, target of your choice excepting nonpublic figures, 1st draft, proofreading, final draft

TARGETS:

cafeteria	portables	a book
advisory	-isms	a movie
dating	a school clique	welfare system
the president	a subject	war on inflation
game shows	summer jobs	teacher salaries

PART THREE

IDEAS TO FINISH AND MOVE ON

SELF-PROVIDED AND PEER-PROVIDED FEEDBACK

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This article presents some ideas about the nature and role of feedback in instruction in writing. For purposes of introduction, feedback is defined simply as information on performance. Feedback can be responses from a classmate to one's writing as well as comments or corrections by a teacher. A more elaborate definition will be developed throughout the article, one that considers the possibility of "self-provided feedback," a concept developed by the author and Daniel R. Wolter.[1] Here the student is given the means of measuring his own performance and thereby provides himself with information on what he has done in a writing assignment.

Feedback from the Reader's Response

In discussions with teachers, I am led to believe that most of them see feedback only in terms of information a writer receives from a reader. That limited view precludes the possibility of self-provided feedback. Similarly, research studies and discussions in articles and methods texts, typically, are limited to responses from the teacher and/or from peers.[2] Moffett's discussion in "Learning to Write by Writing," focuses on the advantages of peer over teacher feedback, though he does briefly note the possibility that a learner can receive information "from his own perception of what he has done."[3]

A More General Definition

Olds, Brethower, and Smith offer a definition of feedback which allows for the possibility of self-provided feedback.[4] They define feedback as any information on a performance which affects subsequent performance. The key word is "affects" and the key considerations are whether or not the information does have an affect and whether the effect is a desirable one. For example, the teacher marks every spelling error in a paper, but the subsequent paper has about as many errors; the corrections have not functioned as feedback. Peers correct each others' errors. With a subsequent paper, a student writes fewer words and only those he is sure he can spell and the composition is undeveloped and uninteresting. The feedback has had undesirable effects.

On the other hand, a student can be asked to proofread his paper for spelling and underline every word he is certain he has spelled correctly, then compute and record the total number of correctly spelled words. If on future papers, this student shows an increase in the proportion of correctly spelled words while maintaining or increasing the length, one could say he had provided himself with desirable feedback.

Feedback and Evaluation

Another limiting view of feedback and of responses from readers is that the information or responses must be qualitative, or explicitly evaluative. A judgement of the overall quality of a composition may indeed function as feedback, as might the

identification of specific qualities: "this is an interesting comparision;" "this is an intriguing opening." However, feedback can also involve quantitative measures, though implicit in the measures will be judgements as to what constitutes good writing. If a student writes undeveloped papers, lacking in specificity, and his papers are much shorten that those of good writers in the class, a count of words by the student might lead to improvement both in the qualities and in length. In a similar way, improvement in style might occur if a student counts the number of different types of sentence structures he uses, as a means of measuring and increasing syntactic variety.

The above suggests that self-provided feedback would be useful with matters that are quantitative or with qualities that can be translated into quantitative terms. The place for peer feedback would be with those matters for which a writer is dependent on a reader's response. These fall into two categories. One involves the judgments of a reader on the success of the writing. If the story was to be humorous, did the readers find it funny? If the essay was to be persuasive, did the readers find it convincing? Readers also let the writer know that "parts" of the writing they found effective, such as effective word choice. The second category includes responses that are not explicitly judgemental, but, rather, show the writer what happened when his work was read; these include a reader's paraphrase of the writing or a reader's describing what he was thinking as he read.[5]

What has been called self-evaluation, then, may include self-provided feedback. Such feedback may not be just a feeling

or perception about hwat one has done, but some information collected through a systematic, though necessarily limited, masurement of one's own writing. The use of self-provided feedback reduces but does not eliminate dependence on their readers. Figure 1 presents additional quantitative measures a student can employ in working toward qualities.

Checklists and Rating Scales

Many teachers have found that the use of checklists and/or rating scales facilitates peer-evaluation or response. Rather than simply being asked to read and comment on each others' papers, students are to note the presence or absence of certain aspects, such as a thesis sentence, and/or to rate their peers' effectiveness in those aspects. These instruments can also be used for self-provided feedback as well as for guidance in writing. The student reads the checklist before starting to write to see what is expected. He writes, then measures his own performance by filling in the checklist. He can revise at this point and/or meet with his peers to receive their comments; they use the same checklist when reading each other's papers.[6]

How Does Feedback Work?

Saying that information functions as feedback by affecting subsequent performance doesn't explain how feedback operates in a learning situation. A theoretical explanation which may help teachers is suggested in a discussion by Smith of motivation, attention, feedback, and learning.[7]

Students who write well, consistently, or who improve their writing are considered motivated. Teachers read and respond to writing partly for evaluation (or grading) but also to motivate. Some teachers believe that if they don't comment on or grade a paper, students will not be motivated to improve. What happens, though, when students are motivated?

Motivated students apparently work harder and are more careful. They are also, according to Smith, more attentive, not just in a general sense but specifically more attentive, or attending, to those matters the teacher considers important. Smith suggests that to motivate is to influence or even control the learner's attention. Thus when the teacher red inks spelling errors or gives a sermon on the importance of spelling, he or she is trying to motivate, or to made students more attentive to their spelling.

What is the role of feedback? The earlier definition of feedback can be elaborated upon as follows: feecback is information on performance which affects subsequent performance by influencing students' attention to those matters which undergo a change in the subsequent performance. The student who is told by his peers that he has a knack for creating interesting characters will, one suspects, be more attentive in future writing to the possibilities for creating interesting characters. The student who tends to write mainly simple and compound sentences is forced to attend to sentence variety when he counts the number of different types of sentences in a paper.

How does increased attention lead to improvement. The answer to this question is suggested by Smith's discussion of discrimination learning. He theorizes that, in learning to make a desirable rsponse, the student must discover the distinctive features of that response. He discovers those features by, in a sense, comparing and contrasting an instance of the desirable response with an instance of an undesirable response. For example, a student who misspells their must learn the word's distinctive features. If he spells their as ther, the distinctive feature to be discovered is the presence of i. If he spells their as thier, the distinctive feature is the order of the letters i and e. He will not learn to spell the word correctly unless he attends to the similarities and differences among their and other words with similar letters or sounds: their, the, ther, their, thier, thire.

If a student needs to improve his style by using more variety in sentence structure, he must attend first to the differences among different sentence types and also to the differences between a passage which shows much variety and one which doesn't. He will discover that sentences can differ in length; e.g., Ted and his brother went to the rock concert. is longer than any one of a series of shorter sentences with the same content: Ted went to a concert. His brother went to a concert. It was a rock concert. The student must also attend to such additional features as conjunctions and connectives. The student must discover that words like but, when, after, however, appear in some sentences but not in others and that they appear more fre-

quently in a passage with sentence variety than one lacking variety.

Attention and Feedback

The discussion above offers an explanation of why many teachers have found extensive correction often ineffective and why others have found peer-feedback more effective than teacher-feedback. In traditional practice, teachers tend to comment and correct extensively, noting many and many kinds of weakneses, in style, form and content. As a result students may be asked to attend to far too much. Overwhelmed, they adopt one of three strategies: writing and not reading over (attending to) what was written, writing fewer words (less to attend to), or not doing any writing (no attention needed).

Peer-feedback has two things going for it. First, many teachers tend to be more selective about the feedback they have students provide each other. They do not expect nor want students to comment extensively on their peers' papers. They may employ checklists which cover only a few aspects of a composition, perhaps only features of form (presence of a thesis statement, topic sentences, and supporting sentences). Even with limited checklists, teachers ask students not to comment on all matters for the first few assignments.

Second, in peer and self-provided feedback situations, students are giving the feedback and therefore are forced to attend to those particular matters they are providing and collecting information on. With teacher-feedback, students are recipients

not givers of information. When the teacher hands back a set of papers to a class, there is no way of knowing students are attending, unless all students are asked to read aloud their papers and the comments.

In developing a definition of feedback, I have attempted to demonstrate that students are not totally dependent on responses from a reader, either a peer or the teacher. Rather, students can provide themselves with feedback, through a systematic, objective measurement of aspects of their writing performance. I have also proposed that self-provided and peer-feedback may be more effective than teacher-feedback in that they better insure that students do attend to those aspects of writing they need to improve. The teacher still needs to read students' writing, partly for evaluation and to see what instruction is needed, but also to provide that information students have not yet learned to provide themselves or their peers.

References

1. Walter J. Lamberg, "Design and Validation of Instruction in Question-directed Narrative Writing, Developed Through Discrimination Programming," in ERIC/RCS: 097 689; abstraced in Resources in Education (March, 1975), p. 41; and Daniel R. Wolter, "Effect of Feedback on Perforamnce on a Creative Writing Task" (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Michigan, 1975).

2. Daniel R. Wolter and Walter J. Lamberg, "The Effect of Feedback on Writing: Research Review and Implications," English in Texas, 8, 3 (Spring, 1977), 67-79.

3. James Moffett, Teaching the Universe of Discourse (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), pp. 188-189.

4. Richard E. Olds, "Response Frequency in Reading Tasks Under Two Schedules of Information" (Ph.D. Disserta-

tion, The University of Michigan, 1970); Dale M. Brethower, "The Classroom as a Self-Modifying System" (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Michigan, 1970); and Donald E. P. Smith, Learning to Read and Write: A Task Analysis (New York: Academic Press, 1976, p. 122.

5. For a discussion of this type of peer-response, see James Moffett, Teaching the Universe of Discourse (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1968), pp. 188-210, and Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers (New York: Oxfort University Press, 1973), pp. 85-92.

6. A checklist for narrative writing designed for self-provided feedback which is also used for peer-feedback, is presented in Walter J. Lambers, "Following a Short Narrative through the Composing Process," in Ouida Clapp (Ed.), Classroom Practices in Teaching English 1977-1978: Teaching the Basics - Really! (Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1977, pp. 30-35.

7. Smith, pp. 25-40; 113-120; 122-137.

For Length and Development.

Count number of:

- words
- paragraphs
- points you think you have developed
- questions you think you have answered

For Mechanics.

Count number (or %) of:

- correctly spelled words
- sentences with correct begining and end punctuation
- sentences with correct internal punctuation

For Style.

Count number of:

- modifiers
- phrases and clauses
- different types of modifiers (single word, phrase, clause)
- words or phrases which show comparison (including figures of speech)
- different sentence patterns
- different types of sentences (simple, compound, complex)

Figure 1. Measures students can use (on a selective basis) on their own writing

RESPONDING TO WRITING WITH A CHECKLIST

Claire Anderson
Bedicheck Junior High School

The checklist in Figure I has been used successfully with both my seventh and eight grade Englsih classes, which are composed of students with a vast range of intellectual and writing abilities. During the first week of school, I introduce the idea of "brainstorming." For the remainder of the year, every non-journal writing assignment must be accompanied by a brainstorming sheet, as indicated on the checklist. I pass out a checklist to each student after we have done some oral brainstorming on the general topic of the composition. I then review each item on the checklist with the class.

I set aside about thirty minutes of a class period a day or two after the assignment is made for students to respond to each other's writing. I have seen and heard some wonderful help being exchanged among all levels of students. As with all ages, junior high students have a superb way of explaining things to each other that the teacher just didn't get across or that student's just didn't remember.

The checklist combines self checking and peer checking, though I do not use peer response groups per se. Most of the items on this sheet are the things that a "good" writer would do automatically, but which a junior high student never seems to remember to do without prodding. This list is a general set of

questions designed to fit any writing assignment I give my junior high students. Pupils of this age seem to appreciate a system which they can learn once and react to similarly each time thereafter.

Initially, students do two things: they have only their good friends do the proofreading, and they answer the first ten items on the checklist with responses they think I want. Quickly they learn to have classmates other than close friends to the proofreading, because those students seem to be more honest and give more helpful hints; they don't just say, "That sounds OK." Secondly, they learn that honest answers to the first ten points produce better papers, especially if they correct a problem noted by a classmate. Many still answered "no" to questions 9 and 10, but they add explanations in the margin (usually about running out of time).

This checklist is attached to the brainstorming paper and the "clean" first draft. The revision process starts after two students and I have gone over the paragraph. Some students attach only the minimum of required pages; others have several pages of brainstorming and many drafts. I ask that students staple together any work related to the assignment to save on marking time. If a student fails to revise or correct a problem, I refer the student to the previous paper rather than marking the error again.

After I have read and commented in writing on each paragraph, I return the set to the class with general comments to the group. I then give the class the remainder of the period to revise, not

just recopy, their works. I am available as the last resource. I ask them to get assistance from their peers first, to reinforce the idea that their classmates are an excellent source of information and help. After each paper is revised, someone who has not been involved yet on that particular paragraph has to proofread it and sign it. More than one person may proofread if the writer chooses. The writer then staples this one on top of all his other work and re-submits it to me. If the paper seems to be quality work for the specific student and if the revision is well-done, I grade the paper. If either of those two if's do not exist, I return the paper and ask the student to revise it again. This process continues until I am satisfied with the work. Sometimes I have to accept less-than-quality work because, unfortunately, not all students care to present their best work.

At first, I get some complaints about the revision process: most students think their work is fine the first time they turn it in. However, after students realize that the more times they revise their work, the better it gets (and therefore the grade in the gradebook is higher), they quit complaining. Another factor they consider is that I post all the papers on bulletin boards, regardless of the grades, and no junior high student wants to look bad in front of his or her peers. I was astounded, pleased, and very proud when I saw how carefully they read displayed papers.

The benefits of this system are tremendous! Language arts should encompass both oral and written communication. Both of these areas are addressed; students read the written ideas and

respond orally. This process saves grading and marking time because the papers are of higher quality when I receive them than when I did not use this checklist. Students realize that their signature means something, and they no longer blithely sign any paper someone shoves onto their desk. They want to make sure that they have checked it as carefully as they can because they know I will make a comment to the proofreaders if they haven't done their job well. Lastly, I see and hear students who discuss their composition work and who are proud of their accomplishments.

1. Have I done my brainstorming sheet? _____
2. What is my topic (main idea)? _____

   _____
3. Write my topic sentence here. _____

   _____

   _____
4. I have written _____ sentences in my paragraph. (fill in number)
5. Do I have an original title on the top line? _____
6. Does my title fit what I am saying in my paragraph? _____
7. Did I indent my paragraph? _____
8. Write my clincher sentence (conclusion) here. _____

   _____

   _____
9. I have written this as neatly as I can. _____
10. I have read my paragraph out loud to check for possible left-out words or confusing ideas. _____
11. _____ (signature)
12. _____ (signature)

have read and checked this paragraph for spelling, punctuation, complete sentences, unity, grammaticatical usage, etc.

My name _____ Date _____

turn in, in order: this sheet
paragraph
brainstorming

Figure 1. Paragraph Checklist

THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVISION

Jolene S. Hall
Lamar Junior High School

Early in the writing process, student writers must be made aware that they are responsible for the extent to which the first and subsequent drafts are revised. Students must discover that no piece of writing will be as good as it could be if it is written only once. Literally, the word revise means "to look at again." Applied to writing, however, it means not only to look at again but also to correct, change, and rewrite to improve the effect the composition will have on its audience.

Revising is a pact between teacher and student writer. The teacher agrees to provide sound reasons for asking the student to write and, after the student has written, to counsel the writer about ways to improve the writing. Revision is also a pact between writer and reader, whether or not the teacher is the ultimate reader. Effective writers revise and polish their writing many times during the writing process in an effort to strike an effective balance between material, purpose, and audience.

Once students become aware of what revision is, they will cut out unnecessary words and replace phrases with better ones before handing in compositions to the teacher for expert judgment and advice. Discovering that revision is going on automatically all the time - during the thinking period which precedes writing

as well as during the writing and revising periods - student-writers will ultimately assume the responsibility for writing which successfully and clearly communicates the intended message.

Special activities can be designed, or selected from workbooks to help students develop particular skills and qualities that can be applied to revising. An example is in Figure 1. Effective Activities are in the following:

Bramer, Mary K. The Desperation Day Book. Scholastic Book Services. New York, 1978.

Healy, Mary, Joyce E. Wilson and Russell Hill. Oral and Written Communication: A Unit Lesson Approach. Lexington: Ginn, 1974.

Maurer, Kenneth. Write It Right! Los Angeles: Wise Owl Publications, 1976.

"Shifting Gears," Tab Skills Masters: Student Editor Kit (4). New York: Scholastic Magazines, 1978.

Sohn, David A. Pictures for Writing. New York: Bantam Books, 1969.

Objective — To emphasize the need for clarity of expression in communication

Materials — Manila envelope, index cards or paper strips with sentences written on them

Sentences:

1. The teacher is mean.
2. I forgot my assignment.
3. It's cold in here.
4. Whose book is this?
5. The moon is full.
6. Clean off the table.
7. Do you have any paper?
8. My tooth aches.
9. He's unhappy.
10. I think I'm going to cry.
11. I have a cold.
12. I think I'm going to vomit.
13. What an ugly dress!
14. The poster is beautiful
15. My nose itches.
16. Is it lunch time?
17. I hate this purse.
18. May I borrow a dollar?
19. I have a sprained ankle.
20. Do you like my ring?
21. These shoes are too small.
22. Writing is hard work.
23. I love homework.
24. I'm sleeping
25. May I see your comb?

Procedures:

Teacher

1. Write or type the sentences on index cards or paper strips.
2. Place cards/strips in large manila envelope.
3. Distrubute cards/slips to students.
4. Tell students to keep cards/ cards/slips confidential. No talking allowed.
5. Inform students that no sentence is longer than 6 words.
6. Tell students that they will act out the sentence on the card according to the number on the card/slip.

Students

1. Number a sheet of paper based on the total number of students present.
2. Draw a card/slip from the manila envelope.
3. Do not show or tell anyone what the sentence is.
4. According to the number on the card/slip, go to the front of the room and act out your sentence. Use facial expressions, gestures and actions.
5. As each student completes his acting, classmates are to write what they think the sentence is.

Figure 1. Clarifying Expression with Dramatics

Evaluation

1. Share sentences using one or several of the methods below:
   A. Actors read sentences in numerical order.
   B. Student volunteers tell what they think the sentence is.

2. When students have difficulting figuring out what a sentence says, have them suggest to the actor ways the message could have been clarified.

3. Correct answers will be ones which tell the main idea.

Follow-up: This activity may serve as the topic of a discussion or as writing stimulus.

Figure 1. Continued

DISORDERS OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE: AN APPROACH FOR REMEDIATION

Susan Wiswell
Anderson Senior High School

Definition:

Dysgraphia, apraxia, and agraphia are terms used to describe the condition exhibited by students with severe problems in written language. Dysgraphia is the inability to copy. Apraxia is the inability to write spontaneously or from dictation, but to be able to copy from a model. Agraphia is the inability to formulate thoughts on paper correctly and in a manner not made in speaking.[1] These inabilities may indicate serious impairment of functioning, but not necessarily a total deficit. With instruction, these problems can be minimized.

Many students with these severe language difficulties naturally dislike written communication and either devise elaborate mental schemes to compensate for their deficits or simply avoid all written activities.[2]

The etiology for these problems is given several sources. According to deHirsch, disgraphics exhibit bizarre spelling patterns due to inability to retain the internal design of the printed words and to carry this design to another setting. Poor visual and auditory memory and discrimination are also given as causes of spelling difficulties. However, little systematic research to analyze the problems and the process involved in written expression has been conducted with the learning disabled student.[4]

Insight into exactly which skill areas a student is deficit in would begin with some type of diagnostic assessment. A three part assessment can be conducted of the skills of handwriting, spelling, and written expression. In the area of written expression, the factors of fluency, form, and correctness would be evaluated.

The procedure for complete assessment would be to have students:

1. copy a model from the blackboard or overhead projector
2. write from dictation
3. write in a free, focused, or guided writing

Consideration should be given to such variables in assessing the student's work as suggested by Wallace:[5]

1. consistent difficulty in copying or revisualizing specific words or letters.
2. patterns of errors in spelling
3. grasp of pencil, position of hand, body, paper
4. consistent errors in syntax or grammer (correctness)
5. difficulties in the production of the letters being used (handwriting)
6. frequency of words, sentences, paragraphs (fluency)

In addition to these variables, some attention should be directed to the content of a student's writing for particular idiosyncratic inclusion or exclusion of a particular letter, word, or idea, for example, the student who always substitutes the word "was" for the word "saw".

Instruction

At this point, a more concrete, consistent plan of instruction for the students should be implemented with activities in which the student can succeed and yet still be challenged. The following list gives some suggested sequential learning activities.

Handwriting

Students practices cursive writing. They have available to them: (1) a chart with cursive letters, which is displayed at all times, (2) a workbook on handwriting for practice and review, and (3) appropriate models of letters in the teacher's own handwriting. In addition, the teacher demonstrates how to form letters that are particularly troublesome.

Sentence Building

Students practice sentence building by (1) organizing separate scrambled sentences, (2) organizing scrambled sentences into paragraphs, (3) writing the beginning and endings of fragments provided by the teacher (with models), (4) combining kernel sentences into more sophisticated sentences, following models, (5) writing sentences (then sets of sentences) which name or describe objects, pictures, persons, actions, and scenes, (6) writing sentences to describe a character or action after reading or listening to a story or watching a film, and (7) writing for short periods each day to increase length, with writing responded to by a peer group or by the teacher.

Vocabulary Development

Students (1) read new words aloud, repeating them after the teacher, (2) read new words in context of selections and discuss their meanings, and copy model sentences using words, (3) write original sentences (or larger pieces) using 90 percent of the new words (with the sentences read to a classmate or the teacher),

and (4) try to use the new vocabulary in journal or other periodic writing and in speech.

Further Recommendations

In order to maximize the opportunities for achievement and improvement for the student with serious disorders of written language and to minimize frustration inducing factors which interfere with the mastery of skills, some variables in the instruction process must be analyzed carefully and critically. The mode of instruction, both input and output, adjustment of the expectations and objectives if necessary to fit the needs and abilities of the students, the rate at which the students learn, and the time involved to complete an entire assignment or task are all factors which should be considered. With these factors in mind and with the effective instructional activities, students with serious disorders of written language can become competent writers.

References

[1]D.K. Johnson and H. R. Hyklebust, Learning Disabilities: Educational Principles and Practices (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1971).

[2]C. Compton, "Teaching in the Classroom," in G. Wallace and J.M. Kaufman, Teaching Children with Learning Problems (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1978).

[3]K. deHirsch, The Concept of Plasticity and Language Disabilities. (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Orthopsychiatric Association, Washington, D.C., March, 1963).

[4]L. Mann, et al. Teaching the Learning Disabled Adolescent (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978).

[5]G. Wallace and J.M. Kaufman, Teaching Children with Learning Problems (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1978).

PLANNING FOR THE SPONTANEOUS ESSAY

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McCallum Senior High School

Rationale

Those of us who are teachers in the trenches of modern high school education like to feel that the great towers of the universities are grinding away at research which will ultimately provide the answers to great questions of the day. We all know those questions by heart. "Why can't Johnny read?" "Why can't Johnny write?"

Many partial answers have been found and many partial solutions have been offered. It seems at present that making Johnny feel secure about his writing is paramount for progress in the area of composition. Ken Macrorie has argued that if students write from their own experiences they will become better writers. John Daly of the University of Texas at Austin has postulated his work on writing anxiety through research in the field of speech. His conclusion is that repeated performance reduces anxiety. Increased experience leads to increased fluency since anxiety is reduced by familiarity with the situation.

If familiarity with a writing situation can reduce anxiety, we should make our students familiar with a large variety of composition experiences. These experiences should reflect their writing experiences beyond the classroom. Experience with the practical uses of the essay technique should be incorporated in the essay learning/teaching process.

Where is Johnny likely to need to write an essay? A common sense approach to this question is required. Johnny is not likely to need to write for the milkman or delivery service. Our hypothetical student will need to write for some occupations. For most of these jobs specialized training is required beyond the high school classroom. Essay writing is usually reserved for those students who are considering the possibility of higher education.

An emphasis in high school essay classes is in teaching students to give themselves much time to write, consider, revise, and rewrite. A very proper procedure, but one not totally grounded in the reality of college course work demands. An impromptu or spontaneous essay is a common means of evaluation in university courses, in English and other disciplines.

Impromptu essays are part of college entrance examinations. The Scholastic Aptitude Test requires a writing sample completed in twenty minutes. Many university departments now require writing samples for advanced placement credits. Simple standardized multiple choice tests are not a thing of the past but, increasingly, universities want proof of writing ability in discipline areas prior to granting advanced credit. In these writing situations, students are expected to produce essay forms and ideas without time for revisions. Students should be prepared in their high school composition courses for this type of writing.

Spontaneous Essays

The teacher should make a conscious effort to find samples of situations where essay questions occur. These should then

be brought into the classroom for examination, trial, and discussion. Possibilities are numerous: essays from other teachers in the high school or junior high school, essay tests from college classrooms, sample SAT and ACT tests, advanced placement exam questions, job or college entrance applications requiring writing samples (such as the autobiography) and automobile accident reports.

Discussion with students of the pragmatic aspect of these assignments should be undertaken. Student must learn to identify the audience for each situation. The level of language appropriate for each should be the focus of pre-writing discussion as well as the rhetorical model.

The teacher must take care to see that students know that there are techniques for taking essay exams successfully. These are usually obvious to those who have survived the university long enough to have received a degree. These simple helps are not always obvious to students.

These techniques include: beginning with the easiest question when given a list of several, jotting down an outline in the margin, mentally preplanning the essay before writing, and budgeting time.

The teacher much emphasize that the essay exam or writing sample needs the thesis of the planned essay and it needs the same proofs and transitions. Since timing themselves on essay exams is so vital, it is important that the teacher provide students with "real-life" experience situations with requirements like those they will meet. It is not necessary for teachers to

grade these papers. Peer response groups make a completely satisfactory way to evaluate the writing. A checklist of important items to look for could be provided by the teacher for peer evaluation.

One final note to the teacher. This activity, the real-life situation, is ideal for the end of the week or the day before the holiday situation. A timed writing situation which is then read by peer response groups can fill the class hour which is otherwise lost to the end of term confusion. Furthermore, it can provide a sense of security for students sometime in the future when they have essay examinations. Perhaps, it may head off the anxiety attack which causes them to fail in circumstances that they should be, and really are, competent to handle.

PUBLICATION FOR THE GIFTED STUDENT

Patty Speer Clark
Taylor High School

When working with gifted student writers, possibilities for publication of student writing expand beyond the classroom or school literary magazine. Gifted students should not only be allowed but encouraged to move outisde the boundaries of the school environment. They should be urged to move past consuming knowledge to contributing knowledge to others. A publication unit with these goals is part of my Advanced Placement Class for gifted and talented twelfth grade English students.

The unit emphasizes process. The object is for the student to experience the same process as the professinal writer. The teacher maintains an atmosphere of professionalism; students know that their ultimate goal is to submit at least one work for publication to an appropriate journal or magazine.

Accually this unit is the final step in a much longer process. Students keep a file of all writing they do in the course. Later they choose pieces to revise for publication, or they may begin an entirely new piece. Many students choose to do both. In making their choice, they are able to draw upon their writing experience in the course: practice in expository and literary discourse. Expository assignments include reports and analyses, critical essays on both society and literature, and informal

essays. Literary assignments include poetry, narration and characterization.

A very good source for these kinds of assignments is Advanced Composition: A Book of Models for Writing.[1] The models, all the works of established authors, are each followed by an analysis and a section called "Techniques to Imitate." Thus the students can see the craftsmanship involved in producing a piece of writing. An excellent source for poetry assignments is "The Poet's Workshop" feature in the Literary Cavalcade student magazine. In this feature a particular poem is discussed and students are then urged to write a similar type of poem.

Other useful sources include Robert's Writing Themes About Literature and Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense.[2] Robert's book deals with writing critical themes about literature including analysis of character and point of view. Perrine's book, an anthology of literature, has discussions on the elements of fiction, drama and poetry. Perrine's discussion of the differences between escape and interpretation in fiction makes the point that most literature contains elements of both, and that even fiction written purely for escape serves a legitimate need. Since many of the publications the students will be writing request escape fiction, students should be aware of this need.

Once the student has decided what type of writing he wants to do, he must then begin to look for a market. Looking for a suitable outlet for his work is what moves the student out of the realm of the classroom into the workaday world. He is no longer writing just for his teacher, classmates or even the student

body. He is attempting to reach a much broader and much more demanding audience. But who is this audience and what are its demands? The answers to these questions are found in two books that are invaluable to the novice writer who is serious about publishing his work: the Writer's Market and The Writer's Handbook, both published annually.[3]

Writer's Market lists all markets available to the writer, according to topic. If a student desires to publish an essay on architecture, for example, he can first look up this subject and then see which publications are listed under it. The listing for each publication provides the necessary information for submitting a manuscript, such as length and type of article, the predominate audience of the publication, the usual amount paid, where to send a letter of query and if unsolicited manuscripts are accepted.

The Writer's Handbook not only contains lists of markets, but also numerous practical articles on how to write and publish various kinds of articles and stories. These articles are divided into the following categories: "Background for Writers," "How to Write," "Nonfiction," Poetry," "Juvenile and Teenage," "Special Fields" and the very useful "Editorial and Business Side." This last section contains such articles as "Legal Rights for Writers," "How Book Publishing Decisions Are Made," and "Manuscript Preparation and Submission." As is stated on its book jacket, The Writer's Handbook can help the student writer decide "What to write, how to write it, and where to sell it."

In addition to The Writer's Handbook, The Writer, Inc., also has a monthly publication, The Writer, a magazine by and for

professional writers. (A year's subscription is twelve dollars and well worth the cost). Each issue contains practical articles by writers on writing and selling manuscripts, a section on prizes offered for various kinds of writing, listings of new markets and listings of specialized markets. For instance, the June 1979 issue has an article by David R. Wheeler entitled, "Behavior Modification for Writers," which offers "techniques to cure procrastination and fear of writing." In my class, students report to the class on these articles, weekly. They also point out any contest or special markets that seem particularly appropriate for writing we are doing in class. In this way the entire class benefits from the relatively small investment of one subscription of The Writer.

Armed with the above tools the student can then begin the actual creative process. My students are required to map out a plan of action before they begin the actual process. The students submit progress reports to me as they move through and revise their basic management plan. Finally at the end of the unit, they turn in a report of the actual procedure they followed and a bibliography of the sources they used. Figure 1 shows the unit plan. Figure 2 has a sample student progress report.

Last year two of my students had excerpts from their essays published in Literary Cavalcade. This is a modest beginning, but the advantage of this unit is that it is open-ended. Student can and do continue to revise and submit their work for publication long after they have left my classroom. In fact I will not be at all surprised to see some familiar names as I page through

Good Housekeeping, Southern Living or even The New Yorker someday soon.

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Goals — To produce a product to be submitted to a particular publication.
To experience the same process as professional writers.

Topics — Students choose their own subject matter. A wide variety of resources may be used.

Time — 4 to 6 weeks

Objectives

1. The student will be able to select the particular mode or aim of discourse he wishes to write.
2. The student will be able to identify his audience.
3. The student will be able to recognize the particular style suited to his audience.
4. The student will be able to identify and solve problems involved in the process of professional writing.
5. The student will be able to produce a sample of writing that conforms to the guidelines of the publication chosen.

Activities

1. Fill out Management Plan for Individual and Small Group Investigation.

2. Submit procedure for pre-writing. This should include such activities as:
   A. Researching possible markets
   B. Reading materials on the writing process
   C. Interviewing professional writers
   D. Reading numerous examples of the type of writing the student wishes to do
   E. Gathering background material for the student's particular topic:
      1. Interviews
      2. Field Trips
      3. Library Research

3. Handout in working bibliography.

4. Submit rough draft to peers and teacher for criticism.

5. Revise rough draft.

6. Type second draft and revise.

7. Submit finished manuscript to selected publication.

Figure 1. Unit Plan

April 24, 1979--Began working with my outline, decided to discard my first outline at several attempts in writing my story.

April 26, 1979--Visited the Taylor Public Library for several hours after work. Looked through the Children's Section of the Library. Read several books that day.

April 28, 1979--Returned to the Taylor Public Library and read more children's books.

April 30, 1979--Decided upon a new subject matter. Began to prepare an outline.

May 4, 1979--Finished my first draft of my publication paper.

May 10-14, 1979--Worked on revising my original draft of my publication paper.

May 16, 1979--Allowed Ms. Clark to read my first draft. Together we discussed possible revision so that the paper would not seem stilted.

May 17, 1979--Turned in a second draft to Ms. Clark to proofing. I was having trouble with dialogue. Ms. Clark and Ms. Gotcher referred me to several textbooks which had sections on writing dialogue.

May 18, 1979--Read all articles on dialogue. Turned in my third draft for publication to Ms. Clark for proofing.

May 19-20, 1979--Tried to make final revisions. Decide to write a fourth draft.

May 22, 1979--Turned in my fourth and final draft to Ms. Clark for proofing. Was now ready to begin typing the final paper.

Figure 2. Progress Report (Jackie Naivar)

BALANCING COMPOSITION EMPHASIS IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Patsy Kimball
Prairie Lea High School

As I sat down last fall to plan my program for the year, I knew that teaching my language arts students to become better writers was to be my primary objective. Convinced during the Texas Hill Country Writing Project at the University of Texas that writing was a process and could best be accomplished when a learner developed fluency before or at least along with an awareness of writing forms and grammatical, mechanical correctness, I was determined to do whatever I could to provide opportunities for my high school classes to become more competent writers.

Keeping this objective before me, I devised a system for managing my English teaching that would allow me to use as much as I could of what we as participants in the project had learned about journal keeping, peer-response grouping, pre-writing, editing, and re-writing activities as well as sentence-combining activities and other procedures for teaching students to write better. This system has helped me solve seven problems--organizing, scheduling, administering, teaching and testing, grading and scoring, keeping records, and reporting--that I have been struggling with for twenty years.

For a base I set up a four day teaching week leaving Friday for a review test. Each day's lesson would include no more than

what could be finished in one period. The plan scheduled vocabulary and literature lessons on Monday. Instead of long stories that required several days to read and study, I chose short selections that could be done in one day. Monday's vocabulary study included only four words which students copied along with definitions and sentence examples. All papers done on Monday were placed inside personal student folders that were filed according to course sections. While any paper could be removed from the folders for completion or study, these folders were not to be removed from the classroom. Slower students could take assignments with them to be completed as long as they were all inside the folders by Friday.

Before long, I learned that I could solve the problem of make-up assignments for absent students simply by slipping a description of the lessons they had missed into their folders. I believe, in some cases, chronic absenteeism was lessened when students realized that they were expected to do the assignments. Coming to school and keeping up their work day by day became much easier than catching up.

Tuesday's lesson was grammar. All practice exercises or class notes, like the work on Monday, were titled and dated. Any handouts, practice sheets, or notes given during any day were dated and titled accordingly.

Wednesday's work was a lesson in composition, including the plan for, and a rough draft of, whatever kind of writing we were focusing upon. In addition to these, each student had to proofread and rewrite his composition which at the beginning of the year were only paragraphs. The faster students often finished their

planning, rough drafts and re-writes during the Wednesday period. Slower as well as very conscientious students worked on the writing out of class.

Peer-response groups took up most of Thursday's class time. The first few minutes of that day included a lesson in writing mechanics--spelling, puncutation, etc.--prior to the group activities and re-writes. Dividing into groups of three or four students, the members each read their papers aloud, allowing time between readings for comments and suggestions. Next, each paper was read by all groups members who marked errors. Some groups, especially those containing the more immature and less confident students, functioned poorly at times. They required my attention and guidance more often than other groups. Almost all students improved their peer-response group participation after several weeks' experience.

Friday's review usually included seven sections. First was a spelling test on words taken from a graded list assigned at the start of the school year. Second, there were questions involving the use or meaning of the four words assigned on Monday. There were also short reviews on the literature selections, grammar, mechanics, composition and other activities.

When the students had finished their tests, they placed them in folders with the other work for that week. All papers would remain inside the folders until the end of each six weeks' reporting periods when the papers would be removed and filed away until the end of the year. Containing four days of practice work and a Friday review test, the folders held the students' efforts for the week.

I decided to award students twenty-five points for each of the four days if they completed every written assignment to the best of their ability, regardless of the number of items they answered correctly and regardless of mistakes, as long as they followed basic guidelines which I spelled out in advance of each assignment. I read over Monday's, Tuesday's, and Wednesday's work and placed a check on them if they were complete. I did mark all errors and made suggestions on the Thursday compositions. These were used by the students when they rewrote their compositions. A students could receive a possible total of one-hundred points for the week. The total number of points was averaged with the Friday test grade to arrive at the student's grade for the week.

A record of all grades--daily work, test scores, and the week's average--was posted on the cover of each student's folder. At all times a student was aware of his grade and had a reasonable understanding of where he could improve if his grades were low. These figures were posted in separate columns for each six week's period. All grades, of course, were regularly posted in my teacher's grade book.

Publications

Toward the end of each six-week period, students chose one of their compositions, rewrote it if necessary, and submitted it for publication in a literary magazine. These writings were turned over to the office prodedures class who typed the stencils, then duplicated and assembled the magazine. My classes published five literary magazines during the year. Almost every student in

the high school--we have only forty-eight--was a five-time-published author.

The publications were usually passed out to the classes on the Monday of the second week and used for that day's literature selection. Students then took them home for their parents to read and sign. They were placed in their folders for future use. At the end of the school year, these five magazines and all other student work were sent home for parent inspection as a way of informing them of their child's efforts.

During the last few weeks of school, all classes devoted several days to rewriting all of their compositions, indexing and binding them, and designing cover pages. This finished product was an anthology of their weekly compositions. Each composition had been rewritten four times.

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